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RED BELT, THE TUSCARORA;

OR,

THE DEATH TRAIL.

BY DR. WM. MASON TURNER,
AUTHOR OF "MASKED MINER," "\$50,000 REWARD," ETC., ETC.

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RED BELT, THE TUSCARORA.

CHAPTER I.

A SHOT IN THE DARK.

"Hist, Red Belt! Down with you!" and as he spoke, the hunter who sat in the stern of the light canoe suddenly drove his paddle into the water and shot the boat under cover of the dark undergrowth which fringed the banks of the stream.

Almost before the little craft had gathered headway, there came a bright flash from the high bluff above, then a sharp report rung loud and clear in the sleeping air, and died away in faint echoes up the gently-flowing river, and amid the dark, wood-crowned hills which loomed up around.

With the last reverberation still quavering in the air, the moon, gliding from behind a cloud-bank, glimmered down brightly over hill and valley, flood and forest. As quickly as it came, so it went, leaving the dark landscape more gloomy than ever.

But, as fleeting as was the broad flash of moonlight, it was sufficient to fling three large shadows, full and strong, upon the bosom of the gently rippling river.

The canoe, however, had now disappeared under the rank, clustering bushes, leaving not a ripple to mark its course, or to point the direction it had taken.

Some ten minutes elapsed, and nothing was heard save the sighing of the breeze which swept down the stream, and crooned softly through the branches of the forest monarchs towering on both sides above the banks.

Three figures, rifles in hand, their gaze bent upon the dark stream that flowed noiselessly by, stood like statues on the shore above. One of them turned impatiently :

"You were mistaken, Wild Hawk; you saw naught but a shadow! Come—"

"A shadow! And no moon then shining! My brother is

not wise, nor is he prudent in teaching Oo-lum-lah, the Wild Hawk, that which he learned even before he took a scalp!" and the gigantic warrior frowned ominously upon the man who had spoken.

"I meant not to offend you, my red brother," said the other, quickly. "I simply—"

"Enough, my brother! Keep a silent and a wary tongue in your mouth, and in *that* manner show the wisdom of which you pale-faces love to boast. It were not well that those below at the block-house should know Oo-lum-lah is within rifle-shot! They bear him no good-will."

The white man replied not for a moment; he seemed to chafe under the quiet tone of superiority assumed by the savage, and to writhe at the stinging reproof so composedly given.

"You may be right, Wild Hawk," he said; "but do not forget that I am no fool—that I too have pulled trigger before to-night—that I know something of woodcraft as well as you."

The man evidently was angry. The Indian turned at once as if to reply, but he checked himself and said nothing. Perhaps it was good for him that the gloom of the black night concealed from the white man the grim, contemptuous smile which, for a fleeting moment, played over the swarthy, painted features of the savage.

Several moments passed in silence, and the conversation, which had been carried on in a guarded undertone, ceased.

The third one of the party had not spoken. He was an Indian, but he was not arrayed in the rich dress and gaudy feathers which marked the other as a chief. He was evidently nothing more than an attendant—perhaps a guide. He, too, looked sharply into the river, holding his rifle ready to fire, should any thing appear.

The tall chief suddenly broke the silence by saying, in a half-hissing voice:

"Wild Hawk was *never* mistaken! And, had his rifle, instead of my white brother's, flung its lead, a different tale had been told."

"And I tell you, proud chief," retorted the white man, in an unguarded, angry tone, "that no man's aim is quicker, na

man's rifle surer, than Derrick Thorne's! But, I have been in the woods long enough to *tell a man from a shadow!*"

Like lightning the Indian turned upon him, his eyes glaring in the gloom, his towering figure trembling with passion.

"SHADOW!" he muttered. "Wild Hawk tells you, pale-face, that you drew trigger on one *who hates us*—ay, *you*, too!—on one whose eye is steady, whose rifle terrible, whose hate never-dying! Does my white brother dream that he covered with his rifle, and let him slip from under it, none other than the great hunter, the Lean Wolf?"

"The Lean Wolf! Sampson Lowe!" and the white man started back violently, his limbs trembling beneath him despite all he could do.

"Ay, my brother! The Wild Hawk knows game, when he sees it. And there was another in the boat—a *chief*."

"A chief? And—"

"No more now; we must be gone. The moon is treacherous; she hides her light behind the black cloud, and the way is dark. But Oo-lum-lah knows the path, and he will lead our white brother safely to the villages, to see our braves and chiefs, to smoke the pipe and talk with them. He has promised the Governor to do this, and the Wild Hawk never broke his word. Come; the night wanes."

Without another word, the tall Indian, silently and gently parting the underbrush, moved noiselessly away up the bank of the river. The other two followed on as silently, and all three were soon hid in the overhanging gloom.

Little did these silent walkers dream, that, not twenty yards away from them, the black muzzles of two deadly rifles bore steadily on the group—those rifles projecting silently through the gently-swaying boughs of the black alder bushes clustering over the very bosom of the water. And as the figures faded out of sight, and their steps died completely away, the rifles were slowly withdrawn.

"We can *breathe* now, Red Belt," muttered the hunter, addressing the young warrior who was seated in the bottom of the boat, silent and composed. "But we'll have trouble; and the fellow who tossed that lead pulls a smart trigger! His bullet is in the side of the boat there; an inch more, and you'd have been laid up for a spell. Then your trip to the

Scioto would have turned out badly! Ha! ha!" and he laughed low and good-humoredly to himself. "But a miss is all we want, and now, we'll attend to that business yet."

The young warrior replied not for a moment; he slowly rose to his feet and steadied himself.

"Thanks, my brother!" he said, in a deep voice. "Thanks to you that Red Belt is not now wandering in the dim shadow land! that Mis-kwa, the Red Sky of Morning, will not be mateless in the forests! Red Belt felt the wind of the singing ball. But, my brother, heard you not the tones which the air bore down to our ears? Did you not know the lying lips whence they came?" and the young Indian paused as he questioned the other.

The old man hesitated for an instant, but then answered frankly:

"No, Red Belt; you know I have seen more moons and snows than you. Your ears are sharper than old Sampson's. Tell me, my brother, who it was we heard speaking."

The warrior leaned down at once, and whispered a name in the hunter's ear so low that it was caught away by the toy-ing breeze and borne swiftly down the stream. But the old man heard it, for he almost sprung to his feet. A deep scowl wrinkled his face, and as he clutched his long rifle, he muttered:

"He! The bloody Mingo! I have not forgotten him, nor the night when I dragged him almost dead from the rushing Maumee—when, to repay my kindness, he turned and drove a bullet into my shoulder! I feel it now. When we meet again, it will only be a matter who will draw bead first! But, we must be off, Red Belt. The money is buried safe under the water, and we have marked the spot. We have too much of the stuff to trust it in the cave, and we away half the time. But, let go the bush; the moon is down and we must be off. We have to take Roy in at the spit, and then we'll make a straight line for our hole. We have work before us, or—I'm a Shawanese!"

The warrior said nothing; he simply and quietly undid the light fastening which secured the canoe to the bush. Then, with a quick shove, he sent the canoe out into the stream. The old hunter softly eased the paddle into the water, and by

gentle strokes, turned the canoe's head down the Kanawha. It soon gathered headway, and sped on silently and swiftly.

Not a word was spoken. Some fifteen minutes elapsed, when the hunter turned the boat in shore, and drove it rapidly toward the bank. As the canoe grated, or, rather, *creaked*, over the soft mud, a low growl came from the thicket ahead.

"Hist! Be quiet, Eagle!" and the hunter leaped ashore.

"Something's wrong, Red Belt," he said, a moment after, in a serious tone; "Eagle is here, tied to a tree; but, Roy is *not* here!"

At that moment a wild, peculiar cry echoed far up the river, then it was suddenly stifled.

The old hunter, uttering an exclamation, reeled backward, and clutched at a tree for support.

"Too venturesome! too venturesome!" he muttered.

In a moment the old man felt a hand laid upon his shoulder. He turned at once. It was the young Indian, who had silently made the canoe fast to the bank, and stepped ashore.

"Be brave, great warrior!" he said, in a low voice of sympathy; "if our white brother, the Leaping Deer, is snared by the foe, let us tell him that he has friends upon the trail who will fight for him to the death!"

"Ay, ay, Red Belt! You are right; we will fight for him to the death; and we must not let him now die for lack of willing fingers to pull the trigger!"

As he spoke, the old man placed his hand to his mouth, and uttered a long, shrill, peculiar cry.

Before the sounding woods had ceased to fling back the echoes of that cheering cry, Red Belt threw back his head also, and, in quick succession, sent forth three notes, which rung grandly through the glades of the sleeping forest. Then there was a complete silence, and naught could be heard save the sad wash of the Kanawha, sweeping on in the black night, and the melancholy forest hymn, moaning above them.

Breathlessly the hunter waited.

At last it came, and suddenly: a wild, almost unearthly whoop, from far up the river, and again and again. Then all was quiet once more.

"'Tis Oo-lum-lah, the Mingo brave, my brother! The dog of a chief flings back to us his battle-cry. We'll accept his

defiance," and the young warrior drew his form up, and clutched his rifle in a tighter grip.

" You are right again, my red brother ! 'Tis the war-whoop of the Mingo, telling us he braves us ! Well, well ; we'll stand with him yet, face to face, foot to foot, when the time comes. But, we'll not answer his cry ; the Mingo knows old Sampson, the Lean Wolf, and he knows Red Belt, the Tuscarora ! 'Twill be a bad day for him when Whistling Dick covers the heart of the Wild Hawk ; for then there'll be mourning and wailing in the lodges on the Scioto. But—" He suddenly paused.

The hunter's hand had been caressing the large dog, which now rubbed against his master's side ; and on the coarse, heavy collar of undressed deer-skin around the noble animal's neck, the old man had felt the rattle and rumple of wampum.

" We've tidings of our white brother, the Leaping Deer," he said, in a low voice. " We'll make a light and see what he says."

As he spoke he proceeded to fire a piece of tow with flint and steel, and heaped on it a bundle of dried fagots. Red Belt instantly staked his blanket so as to circumscribe the light, which was now flashing on the lonely spit.

The beams of that light revealed, first, a powerful dog of the bloodhound species, his huge, intelligent eyes beaming almost humanly into the flaring fire. Above him, towered the tall, lanky, yet sinewy form of Sampson Lowe, the frontiersman. Opposite stood the young warrior, Red Belt—tall, graceful, and muscular in form—serious, sad, and handsome in face.

The old hunter was dressed in the proverbial backwoods style of those days : hunting-shirt, leggins and moccasins. His head was covered with a cap of fox-skin, to which the tail was dependent, and hanging over his broad shoulders. Around his neck were slung a bullet-pouch and powder-horn. In a belt of untanned deer-skin drawn around his waist, was stuck a broad-bladed hatchet, and a long, keen knife with a handle of buck-horn, hid in a deer-skin sheath. There was a place in the belt also for the pistol, which the old hunter was now recharging.

Sampson Lowe must have been sixty years old or more ; for his long hair—albeit of vigorous growth—and sweeping

beard, were white and silvery. But there was a wondrous deal of vitality in his leathery frame, and a hardihood, steadiness and activity in his general appearance which was unmistakable. Red Belt, the Indian, was a much younger man. He was clad in a chief's dress, and was girded around with a broad leather strap, of a dull, faded red color. To his back were his bow and quiver, and he leaned upon a long rifle.

The old hunter bent his ear and listened keenly, but no sound came to him. He then slowly straightened out the crumpled wampum, and leaned down by the fire.

CHAPTER II.

FOOTPRINTS ON THE SHORE.

ON the afternoon of the day, the events of the night of which we have been narrating, a young hunter suddenly paused as he was striding along the banks of the river. This was at a point some eight miles above the spot at which we have chosen to open our story.

The man could not have been more than thirty—barely that; but there was about his face a sad, weary look, which gave him the appearance of one considerably older. He was above the medium height—slender, but firmly knit. His face—that portion which was not covered by a thick, curling black beard—was browned by exposure, and by the healthful breezes of the woods and mountains. A mass of long, raven-hued hair fell far down his shoulders in wild unrestraint—the deer-skin cap which he wore fitting his head tightly, and allowing his luxuriant locks to fall away freely. He was clad in a jaun'y hunting-shirt fringed with green. His leggings were of tanned buck-skin, handsomely decorated, and the moccasins which incased his feet were profusely covered with flashing beads, and were strong and well made.

The young hunter carried no weapon whatever save a large knife in his belt. Behind him, however, trod a powerful hound, watching the other's movements keenly, and treading

as softly among the dry, crisp weeds as if he had always been trained to be so cautious.

As the young hunter paused, the dog stopped too, and sniffing anxiously in the air, pricked up his ears and glared around. The hunter started back and uttered an exclamation of surprise. In a moment his face wrinkled into a deep frown, and he felt hastily in his belt for his knife. Then he started again, and the frown on his brow deepened to one of anxiety and thoughtful seriousness; but he stepped forward at once, upon the soft ooze of the river-bank, and parting the bushes, peered around him in every direction.

Then he stooped down hastily, and began to examine that which had so startled him—*footprints!*

“*He here! I know the impression of his foot; I know the missing toe!*”

The young man slowly rose to his feet. He was trembling in every limb, and his swarthy face was lit up by the glow of a dark, fierce anger.

But he did not move away; he seemed to hesitate; and then beckoning the dog to follow him, he gently took his way forward, going in the direction from which the tracks came. He followed the impressions closely; they came directly from the river.

The hunter at last reached the very margin of the stream, and carefully separating the thickly-growing bushes, peered through.

He started back violently, and an irrestrainable exclamation burst from his lips. The dog, who trod close behind, uttered a low, angry growl, and the hair on his back bristled threateningly up.

Tied to the root of a tree, and half concealed in the bushes which bordered the stream, was a large, long canoe, with high gunwales and a broad beam. Paddles were lying in the bottom, and a bag, apparently of provisions, was cast in the bow.

Silently the young hunter gazed on this singular sight. The dog growled again.

“*Ay, Eagle! You know them as well as I do. They are Mingoes, and this blood-dyed wretch goes with them! But now for business. I wish Sampson and Red Belt were here.*

The money they'll bury is a trifle in comparison to the danger which—”

He did not finish the sentence, but, calling softly to the dog, turned at once and crept away. The dog followed him. In a moment the young hunter had entered the dark wood.

An hour passed, and just as the sun was disappearing, the young hunter stood at the junction of Crooked Creek and the Great Kanawha river. He glanced cautiously around him on all sides, but the dusk of evening was now settling down, and he could not see far.

The tongue of land between the two streams ran down to a sharp point, and on this narrow strip was a tall, rocky bluff. At first view, this seemed nothing more than a wild, bleak cliff, uninhabitable, lonely and desolate; but on close inspection, a dim row of palisades, in a short semicircle, were to be seen far above, on the bald, bare rock.

Nothing else, however, which looked like the handiwork of man, could be seen.

The young man paused only for an instant; then hurried on through the thick underbrush, and in a moment disappeared. When again to be seen he was standing at the foot of the cliff—not on the water-front, but to one side, the left, as you faced the river. He felt around him among the rocks until he had found a cord. Pulling upon this, he soon drew down a long ladder from above, in hinged sections. Planting it firmly on the rocks below, he at once sprung up. He was followed by the dog.

When the young man, with the dog by his side, again stood at the foot of the cliff, a half-hour had passed. The ladder was nowhere to be seen. Then, without waiting a moment, the hunter turned and strode away down the banks of the river.

An hour—then another, and another, passed by; then arose a long, peculiar cry, which, it seemed, was only half uttered.

We will now return to the point of land where we left Sampson Lowe the hunter and Red Belt his companion, by the camp-fire.

The old hunter leaned down low, and smoothing out the wampum, gazed anxiously and keenly at its indented surface. At a glance he understood those cabalistic characters; for his

face grew dark. Then, as a fierce anathema broke from his lips, without a word, he handed the piece of buck-skin to the young warrior.

The haughty, grave-looking Indian received it silently, and said, quietly :

"As Red Belt thought—Mingoes ! and the pale-face renegade, the White Leopard, bears them company."

"Ay ! Derrick Thorne is here again ! The varmint is in the woods once more !" and the hunter gripped his hands fiercely together. "But come, Red Belt, we must eat something, and wait here to see what will happen. We can not return to the cave now. I see how it all happened. And I tell you, my brother, Roy's scalp is not worth a buck-skin patch if he isn't rescued. We must do it, Red Belt, or die !"

The young Indian bowed his head in acquiescence, but made no reply.

The hunter then entered the canoe, and brought ashore a bag containing some jerked venison and hard bread. The two at once partook of a hearty meal. Eagle, likewise, shared in the repast. Then the old man again went into the canoe ; and when he returned to the fire, this time he carried his rifle.

A singular-looking weapon was this. It was of an extraordinary length, with a stock continuing out to the end of the long, slender barrel. The curve for the face-rest was well-marked. The piece was mounted in brass, and it glistened all over—stock, barrel and lock—in oil. It was well kept. A pale-blue flint, with lots of latent fire, was screwed tightly in the hammer, and the small, half-inclined pan-face was shut nicely over the little parcel of powder which it preserved from moisture.

The old man gazed affectionately at the weapon, and having examined it thoroughly in every particular, he placed it carefully against a tree.

The night wore on, and still the hunter and his companion sat around the fire.

It was a cool, crispy night, and the breezes of the early fall were chill and searching. The old hunter drew his blanket over his shoulders, and placing his rifle in reach, leaned against a tree, and closed his eyes. He was accustomed to this kind

of life, and could sleep in the woods in the rain, in the snow, or in the cabin—in the mountains, on the plains, in the block-house—anywhere, wherever slumber overtook him.

Nor had old Sampson now forgotten the startling events of the night, nor the imperiled position of his friend Roydon Howe.

“Keep a watch,” he said to Red belt, opening his eyes after a moment; “you’re younger and fresher than I. Call me if any thing happens.”

“Sleep on, great warrior; Red Belt will guard your slumbers as he would those of the sleeping Mis-kwa,” and the young Indian took his rifle and arose to his feet. He trimmed the fire so that while it still retained its warmth and glow, yet it did not send forth to such a degree its tell-tale sparkle. Then casting another look at the old hunter, the young warrior spoke kindly to the dog, who immediately got up and followed him. Then, up and down the oozy bank trod the young brave, his moccasin giving forth no sound, his eyes glancing about him in every direction, his ears open to the faintest noise.

The night grew on, and the rising wind sung mournfully through the dense foliage of the primeval forest. The water rippled by; and as it felt the increasing force of the mighty wind, it broke on the muddy shore with a monotonous, mournful cadence. Anon the scream of some startled bird awoke the silence of the mournfully-crooning forest, and then the far-off howl of a panther on his midnight rounds for prey, broke on his ear.

And then the canoe, feeling the gentle undulations of the sweeping current, rolled and rode softly, as it receded, and came again, to the elastic bending of the bough, to which it was secured.

Up and down the muddy bank walked the young Indian, tall, steady and erect—his rifle in the hollow of his arm, his eyes as ever roving keenly about him. But gradually his steps grew slower, his pace unsteady, and then, creeping out to the extreme end of the point, where he could get an extended view up and down the river behind him, he halted. Placing his back against a stunted dwarf tree, he gazed out over the broad river, then down toward the dark line which

marked the mighty forests beyond the Ohio. And as he gazed, sorrow and gloom came to his brow, and then soft murmurs fell from his lips. Then they ceased, and the young Indian's head sunk slowly down.

An hour passed, when Red Belt suddenly straightened up as the watchful dog, which crouched by his side, uttered a low, warning growl, his nose pointed toward the river. The Indian looked thither for a moment, and then, quick as lightning, he threw his rifle up; his eye gleamed down the barrel, and his steady finger was upon the nicely-set trigger.

But he hesitated, and slowly eased down the hammer of his rifle. He was in the deep shadow of the dwarf tree, and could not be seen. Patting the dog gently, to quiet him, he continued to gaze.

Slowly the dark object, showing dimly above the water, came closer in shore. The fire on the bank was now faint and smoldering. The object came on; and then, with a few vigorous strokes, it drove itself noiselessly toward the canoe of the hunter.

In an instant Red Belt, raising his wild war-shout, turned, and, followed by Eagle, darted toward the canoe. Then came deep anathemas, and the clashing of knives as the water was beaten newly. Red Belt had closed in a death-struggle with his foe!

There in the narrow boat the combatants stood, breast to breast, foot to foot, and silently fought the wagered fight.

Gradually Red Belt pressed his antagonist back, toward the stern of the boat, the light craft shaking and oscillating fearfully. Backward the Tuscarora pushed his red adversary. But suddenly the other, who was a far more powerful savage than his opponent, paused, and with a quick, desperate leap, dashed upon Red Belt.

The onset was so unexpected and so furious, that the young Indian was taken at an advantage. He fell, like lead, his head striking the gunwale of the boat. His arms dropped listlessly by his side, and his rifle, which he had hastily dropped across a seat, slid overboard.

In a moment the brawny savage leaned down, and clutched his senseless foe by his scalp-lock. But in the twinkling of an eye a low growl sounded on the air, and Eagle darted

into the boat. Dashing straight upon the Indian, he gripped him by his descending right arm.

So great was the shock that the canoe listed fearfully, balanced for a moment on the edge of the gunwale, and then went entirely over with a loud splash. The faithful dog still held on. The boat filled at once and went down; but, being held by the deer-skin thong to the bough, it did not move when at the bottom.

At this moment old Sampson Lowe leaped to his feet, and, rifle in hand, glanced about him. Then in a moment, he kicked away the embers of the smoldering fire, leaving the lonely spit in dense darkness. Then, as a splash broke on the water, and the smothered, angry growling of Eagle was borne to his ears, he quickly raised his long rifle to his face.

But all at once there came the stifling cry of a half-drowned man, as the dog suddenly loosed his hold upon the arm, and seized the Indian by the throat. The old hunter drew a bead on the dark head of the fellow, who was now fast being strangled by Eagle; but then he slowly lowered the rifle.

"No, no!" he muttered, "I *can not* take advantage of him. I can not see a human crittur drowned by a brute, though the villain deserves it. Come in, Eagle—come in!"

The dog at once loosed his hold, but evidently with reluctance, and swam leisurely ashore.

Instantly the wounded Indian sunk out of sight; but the hunter kept his eyes fixed on the water where he had disappeared. Then again all at once the old man flung his rifle to his face; but he lowered it at once, as the Indian, now far out in the main stream, dived again.

"'Tis all right—all right!" muttered the hunter. "But—Ha! Red Belt!" he suddenly exclaimed, as, at that moment, the young warrior slowly drew himself out of the water, near the shore, and advanced toward his friend.

"Are you hurt, my brother?" asked old Sampson, quickly, hurrying to the side of the other.

"No, great warrior; Red Belt was taken at advantage; though the red-hearted Mingo touched me not with his knife."

There was a silence for a few moments, and then the old hunter muttered, more as if speaking with himself than addressing his companion:

"And Roy—in *their* hands! God stand by him!"

In a few moments, during which time Red Belt had regained his rifle, the canoe was found by the aid of the thong, hauled ashore and capsized. Then it was thoroughly dried out with tufts of wild grass, and once again launched upon the surface of the stream.

The night was now far advanced, as the hunter and his friend crouched silently on the bank. The wind was still sweeping down the broad bosom of the river. No word had been spoken for a long time, when, all at once, the old hunter bent his ear.

"Listen, my brother," he whispered, in a low tone, "and tell me what you hear."

The Indian leaned his head down, and for a moment spoke not. At length, as if his mind was made up, he said, in a low tone:

"I hear the ripple of a canoe's bow; it comes near the bank. Yes, I hear the cautious stroke of a paddle."

"Right, my brother. Be ready, for the time approaches."

Then there was a perfect silence, unbroken save by the mournful wash of the river as it flowed onward in its ceaseless course.

The old hunter softly untied the thong which held the boat, and drew the light craft noiselessly toward him. Then he patted the head of the faithful dog, who stood beside him, and motioned Red Belt to get aboard. The young warrior obeyed.

He had scarcely entered the boat, when a large canoe, high out of the water, swept by the spit. It came so close that old Sampson saw distinctly in it several dusky figures; but only two paddled.

In an instant the old man raised his rifle; but then, the boat had shot around the point, and was out of sight.

"I can not throw away my lead! and Whistling Dick has *never* lied!" he muttered, as, lowering his weapon, he stepped like a cat into his own canoe, and cast the head of the boat off. Then he strode to the stern; and taking the paddle, by a quiet, dextrous movement, he shot his boat out into the stream, and followed on after the other craft which had just passed. On and on they went.

A half-hour went by ; still the hunter's canoe hung like a shadow in the wake of the other.

At length the broad, brawling Ohio was reached. The wind was now high, and the wide expanse of yellow water—showing in an extended perspective—lay tossing and tumbling before them.

The large canoe hesitated not ; pointing its prow onward, it dashed boldly forward.

But old Sampson Lowe suddenly backed water vigorously as he shook his head.

"No, no!" he muttered, "we can not stand that wind ! We'll return to the cave ! Something shall be done at once."

The next morning, as the sun was breaking over the edge of the tree-tops in the east, Sampson and Red Belt stepped from their boat at the foot of the tall cliff, which we have mentioned before as being on the jutting point at the junction of Crooked Creek and the Great Kanawha river.

CHAPTER III.

CAPTURED.

ROYDON HOWE, as we know his name to be, after again finding the broad trail on the bank of the river, strode away boldly but cautiously. We have before referred to this fact.

After getting well down upon the river again, he slackened his speed and crept cautiously onward. He found the same tracks again ; but now fresh ones were there too, and the old trail was half obliterated.

Stealing forward once again to the margin of the river, the young hunter retraced his steps for a considerable distance. At last he paused, and drawing aside the bushes, peered through again.

He started violently ; for the canoe had disappeared.

A canoe in this portion of the great Kanawha, at that period —A. D. 1774—the year of "Dunmore's war," was an unusual and a suspicious sight. It is true that these western waters

were trapped over, and traversed by the hardy hunters—but not this particular portion. It was then the frontier of the colony, and what might then be termed the “far-west.”

Roydon Howe glanced around him; he seemed to reflect for a moment. Then resuming the trail, he turned quickly down the river. In a moment, followed by the dog, he had disappeared in the thick underbrush bordering the stream.

When he once more appeared, the dog did not accompany him.

Once more he resumed his way, and as he proceeded, his step grew more cautious and guarded than ever. He carried his rifle in his hand, ready for any emergency. He glanced keenly about him on every side.

It was now so dark that the young hunter could not see the trail; but he knelt down and felt for it with his hands, and having found it, again followed softly onward. The time sped by, and it was now a late hour in the night.

Suddenly he paused and stood like a statue, as a rifle-shot sounded, sharp and clear, in the still air. The report rung and rung again, coming from the clustering bushes on the neighboring river-bank. The young man did not move a muscle; breathlessly he waited.

But no other sound came; and then the last reverberation of the rifle-shot had died away. He turned about cautiously, and creeping through the bushes hurried away, abandoning the trail altogether.

The young man passed on for some distance, and then once again turned in toward the bank of the river. Then he paused and stooping down, untied his moccasins, and putting them on hind part before, secured them in their places with slender thongs, which he drew from his pouch.

Again he strode on, and was now upon the bank of the river, and beneath the thick covering of the underbrush. Suddenly he paused again, for just ahead of him he had heard the snapping of a twig. In an instant, his rifle was down at a rest—then—a present—his thumb upon the hammer. But before he could move, he heard the sharp springing of a rifle-lock, and then like a stroke of lightning he was struck a heavy blow from behind.

Roydon Howe staggered backward and endeavored to defend

himself; but in the twinkling of an eye, he was seized by powerful hands, and hurled to the ground. But again he arose to his feet, and with a mighty effort flung his rifle into the river, knowing that he was ambushed, and that nothing but desperate fighting—unencumbered too—could release him from his perilous position.

Despite the disparity of numbers in the fight, one of the attacking party went down before the vigorous blow of the young hunter's fist—and then another. But this could not last. A tall, gigantic fellow suddenly struck out a vicious stroke; it fell on Roydon Howe's temple, and the young man reeled.

It was then that he sent forth his wailing cry, which told to his companions far away on the lonely spit, the tale. But ere his cry was finished he was struck a brutal blow across the mouth. He sunk almost insensible to the ground.

Late that night, when the hostile boat swept by, in a stone's throw of the point on which old Sampson and Red Belt stood, Roydon Howe was just recovering his senses. But his mouth was now closed by a cruel gag, and his hands were bound behind him.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD SAMPSON SEES SOMETHING.

As we have mentioned in a preceding chapter, the sun was just rising on the morning following these events when Sampson Lowe and Red Belt appeared at the foot of the cliff, to the left side, and then were soon hid from view above. They were followed by Eagle.

As soon as the old hunter had attained the top of the rock, he glanced around him. In a moment he had taken in every thing. The cliff was in "fighting trim"—that is, it was cleared of all unnecessary articles on its summit, and the little gate was securely barred.

But, the old man missed the form of one very dear to him—missed him who had been so thoughtful of *them*. He missed Roydon Howe, his companion in many old-time dangers; and the hunter heaved a sigh.

Shaking off his sadness however, he turned to his companion, and saying something in an undertone, disappeared at once in the recesses of the cave, followed by Red Belt and Eagle.

The day passed slowly, and the shades of night were beginning to fall before Sampson Lowe and Red Belt emerged from the cave. But, they had not been idle. Of course they had slept some to recruit them for the exhaustion and loss of sleep of the night before, and to fit them for the work they had mapped out for themselves to do.

A moment or so, and under Red Belt's hands a bright fire sparkled on the cliff. Its beams did not penetrate beyond the palisade. Then the two hunters prepared their evening meal. They ate in silence; and then Eagle had his share.

"Now, my brother," at length said the old man, "we must dress the *palisades* and fix the canoe. Before the moon rises, we must be off. My heart misgives me that we did not follow anyway, for ere this, harm *may* have befallen poor Roy."

The Indian made no reply; he simply bowed his head, and then scattering the burning brands with his moccasined foot, he looked up approvingly. The hunter then went cautiously to the palisades and peered in all directions—up the creek to the left—and down the great Kanawha to the right—then over the wild, moaning forest in front of him. But, as night was rapidly falling he could not see far. Then he bent his ear and listened; but no sound came to him save the mournful forest hymn, and the deadened wash of the waters as they met and broke on the jagged rocks at the foot of the cliff.

"'Tis well!" he muttered. "They have gone, and I know their way. We can work in peace, my brother," he said, turning to the young warrior, "and the sooner we begin the better. You know, that moonlight often tells tales."

He approached the gate in the palisade—opened it, and went out; Red Belt followed; but Eagle, at a sign from the hunter, held back, and settled himself quietly by the mouth of the cave.

The two men were gone for a half-hour. When they returned they bore on their shoulders large bundles of freshly-cut evergreen boughs. They entered the inclosure by the gate, and then with the aid of a rude ladder they set to work covering the tall palisades with the green branches.

A half-hour and an hour elapsed before the men had

completed their task; but when it was done, it was well and thoroughly done; for from the outside the cliff looked like a dense pine and hemlock copse—the hiding-place for wild beasts and reptiles, but not the habitation of man. For a moment the two surveyed their work with satisfaction. Then again they emerged from the inclosure and descending the ladder which they had let down, crept around to the water-front.

This time they carried two long boards, bent to a certain curve, and in different directions—the one to the other. These boards they had brought from the recesses of the cave.

The men soon found the boat which they had hidden away in the rocks, and lighting a fagot of pitch-pine by means of a ball of greased tow, which they fired with a flint and steel—they began their work. This consisted in attaching the boards to the low gunwales of the canoe, thus making the boat more staunch—more able to stand wind and water. This was soon accomplished, for the boards fitted accurately. It was evident they had often been used.

Suddenly, as the men finished the work, and were about to launch the boat, did Sampson pause. The light had flashed on a flattened bullet, which was partly buried in the seasoned timbers of the canoe. The old hunter pointed silently to it for a moment.

"We'll keep it as a remembrance from our friends, my brother," he said at length in a low tone, and with a light laugh; "it may bring us good luck! Who knows!"

As he spoke he drew his hunting-knife, and leaning down, carefully dug the piece of lead from the wood.

The old man straightened up, and holding the light near, examined the bullet closely. All at once he started as if an arrow had pierced his heart, and a terrible frown, fierce and deadly, wrinkled old Sampson's brow. He almost gasped for breath.

The Indian quietly drew near and looked on.

"What is it, great warrior?" he asked. "Is there any thing in a rifle-ball to call up such emotions?" and the young brave's words had a spice of reproach in them.

The old man started, and reared himself erect; but he could not drive away the terrible frown from his swarthy cheek and brow.

"I know, my brother," he said, in a low, deep voice, which was tremulous from conflicting emotions, "that it becomes women and children better to show anger than it does an old man who has grown gray in the woods, and wrinkled and tanned under all sorts of weather, on the war-path. But, my brother, that piece of lead calls up an old-time tale, which the Lean Wolf would not hear again! That bullet makes the back of old Sampson Lowe to smart, and his heart to ache! I know that ball; there is but one rifle in the settlements which tosses such lead. That rifle is the property of Derrick Thorne, the White Leopard—the renegade and base-hearted scoundrel whose life old Sampson has long ago sworn away!"

"Then all is well, my brother," quietly responded the Indian. "The day approaches when the Lean Wolf and the White Leopard may stand breast to breast. Then the Red Belt will be by his brother's side; and his rifle and his bow—"

"No, no, my red brother! I know what you mean, and would say. But I could not allow it! When the day comes, old Sampson, the Lean Wolf, must do the work himself! Ay! he must tear the heart from the coward's breast, and wash his hands in his blood! And Heaven bear him witness, old Sampson will do it!"

The old man's face was fearful to look upon, showing there on the wild banks of the wood-fringed river, as the flaring light from the flashing fagot fell over him.

A moment passed, and no word was spoken. But the silence was suddenly broken by the old hunter, who said, in a voice strangely, unusually, harsh:

"Come, my brother; we've work to do! Old Sampson is now on the war-path, and carries his knife between his teeth!"

Leaving the boat where it was, the old hunter reascended the cliff—Red Belt close behind him. A few moments passed, when the ladder was noiselessly drawn up from above and secured. Then in a few moments the old hunter, Red Belt and Eagle stood at the bottom of the bluff. In a short time they had safely launched the canoe.

Carefully placing their weapons in and stowing away in the bow a bag of provisions, the old man entered, giving Eagle a sign to follow him. Then Red Belt gave the canoe a vigorous shove out, and sprung nimbly aboard himself.

At that moment the morn climbed lazily over the tops of the trees, and glinted down its soft, silver splendor. Old Sampson uttered an exclamation of vexation, and hastily seizing the paddle, urged the light craft under the friendly shade of the trees which clustered close to the bank. Red Belt likewise quietly took a paddle and seated himself for work, on the bottom of the boat—Eagle lying near him.

In an instant the head of the canoe was turned down-stream, and as it felt the sweeping wash of the river, and the sturdy strokes from the paddles, it darted away like a bird.

As they reached a bend in the river, old Sampson glanced at his cave far back on the towering bluff. The moon was now shining full upon the place, and lit it up with a wild, weird splendor. But, save the bright, pale rays resting there, all was gloom, silence and desolation. Then the old man smiled grimly and contentedly to himself, as, turning to his work again, he drove the paddle into the water with renewed force.

The canoe dashed onward, sliding with a noiseless yet rapid motion, first into the broad flashes of moonlight, and then into the dark shadows of the overhanging trees.

On they sped. The river gradually grew wider, it became more mud-like in color, and the hunter knew that they were approaching its mouth where it emptied into the Ohio. The old man arose to his feet and gazed ahead of him in the gloom.

The wind was sweeping raw and fresh up the river, and little waves were already rolling in from the larger river. The old hunter shook his head ominously, but said nothing.

The night was deepening, and the wild, discordant cries of the panther and catamount sounded fearfully distinct over the sleeping forest. Old Sampson grasped the paddles and urged the boat onward, still hugging the bank.

The jutting headland—the last between them and the Ohio, was reached. The hunter, with his eyes straight before him, shot the boat onward.

Suddenly the old man uttered a guarded exclamation, and backed water vigorously.

Old Sampson had seen something!

CHAPTER V.

A KNIFE IN THE AIR.

WHEN Roydon Howe, lying flat on his back upon the bottom of the big canoe, sped by the jutting spit up the Great Kanawha, the night of his capture, he endeavored to tear away the gag from his mouth, at any risk, to give the alarm and make himself known to his friends, whom he knew to be on the gloom-enshrouded strip of land. But his efforts were worse than useless, nor did they escape the notice of his captors. They, however, paid no heed to him, further than to brandish a tomahawk, with a whizzing swoop, over his head.

The particular fellow who did this was a swarthy savage, who sat in the middle of the boat, near the prisoner. The upper part of his arms, shoulders and throat were wrapped rudely around with a strip of blanket. The motion of the boat seemed to give him pain.

The young hunter lay still ; he was a brave man, but he was not foolhardy. He knew that he had fallen into the hands of those who, on the slightest provocation, would put him to death. He would not die now, for in his mind was the remembrance of a dark tale—a terrible tragedy. More than that, there was still registered in his brain a vow—that was unfulfilled.

As the latter thought crept into Roydon Howe's bosom, his frame shook convulsively. But he was powerless ; he could not even cast his eyes around him.

The boat darted on, and at last, as we have before stated, entered the Ohio. The broad river was now tossing and rolling under the influence of the heavy wind, rushing down over the wide, open sweep. But the canoe kept straight ahead.

The water grew rougher as they proceeded, breaking over the sharp bows of the canoe, and flying back over it in a white, feathery spray. But the tall, herculean savage who sat aft, still pointed the head of the boat straight across, and plied his paddle well.

The other man who helped to propel the boat cowered and shrank away at first, as he saw the combing waves rolling toward him ; but soon, seeing that the canoe was staunch and rode well, he regained his composure and bent once more to his work.

The prisoner was thoroughly saturated with the water which broke wildly over the bows ; and at one time he struggled fearfully as the whole crest of a wave combed into the boat, over the bulwarks. Still, however, his captors paid no heed to him.

At length, after an hour's hard paddling, the canoe safely crossed the river, and her rounded bottom grated on the sandy shore of the opposite side. The party sprung out, and hauling the canoe high up on the bank, beyond the reach of the current, rested for a moment.

But it was only for a moment.

The tall savage—or Wild Hawk, the Mingo, as we might as well call him—assisted by his companion, who, though his face was now painted, and he wore an Indian dress, we know to be Derrick Thorne, the White Leopard—pulled the canoe still further up the bank, and hid it carefully out of sight, under a thickly-spreading fir-tree.

This occupied but a short while ; and then, at a sign from Wild Hawk, the little party set forward, the chief himself leading the way, Roydon Howe coming directly behind, while to his rear trod the other two, their rifles resting in the hollow of their arms, their eyes watching every movement of the prisoner.

But as sharp as was their scrutiny, they did not observe that Roydon Howe, while no eyes were upon him, suddenly bent down a wild-flower under his moccasin, which, by the by, was still reversed upon his foot. Then, quick as lightning, he bent another tiny flower over the other one. This was all done in a few seconds.

Then and thus slowly the night passed, and at last another day dawned. The dark, dim clouds in the east gradually grew purple, then golden, and at last the sun climbed up over the mountains, which frowned down upon the scene. But Wild Hawk, though he nor his party had tasted food for nearly a day, still hurried on. It was plain that the chief wished to

place a considerable distance between his heels and the river; and his face was still pointed west.

Roydon Howe knew well enough the destination of the party; he knew this, as soon as they had entered the woods on the west bank of the Ohio, and had taken their course. He had followed the same track more than once, and on dangerous duty, too. He was well aware that the party was heading for the Indian villages on the Scioto, and he shuddered as he thought of the future.

The party had now reached the foot of a tall steep mountain. The forest was dense and almost impassable; and now, at least fifteen miles lay between them and the river. They halted and set about preparing the morning meal. They had chosen a place near a spring, and dry fagots were around them in abundance. Very soon a fire was crackling in the dense wood, and in a few moments the plain but substantial meal was prepared.

Wild Hawk directed the other Indians to remove the gag from the prisoner's mouth, and to unbind his arms, so as to give him the use of *one* hand. Roydon Howe uttered an exclamation of relief, and shot a look of gratitude toward the chief. The young man was bountifully supplied with food.

Then the meal was finished, and the tall Indian having with his own hand bound the prisoner securely to a tree, yet not so as to interfere with his movements, wrapped himself in his blanket and laid down. The other two did the same.

Roydon Howe was left alone; for his captors were soon asleep. An hour passed, when one of the men suddenly turned over in his sleep, so that the sun shone full in his face.

That face was turned toward the prisoner.

The young man started violently, and then controlling himself as well as he could, muttered;

“*‘Tis he!* The villain! the black-hearted wretch, who so basely—” At that moment the man opened his eyes and glanced at the other. He shook his clenched hand threateningly, and was about to turn over, when Roydon Howe, in a low, hissing voice, said:

“Again we meet, scoundrel and coward! Oh, God! that my hands are bound! But the day *will* come, when—”

“Enough, boy! Don’t talk to me!” interrupted the other,

speaking English. "Don't be telling *me* of a day that will come, when *yours* is already almost here! Let *that* satisfy you. And hark ye, lad, should you ever stand face to face with Derrick Thorne, rifle in hand, rest assured, my fine fellow, that your courage shall not die away for the lack of the pulling of a trigger. And, now—the less you say, the better! Don't forget it!"

The prisoner was about to reply when Wild Hawk suddenly awoke; in a moment he was upon his feet, and with a threatening gesture strode toward the disguised white man.

Derrick Thorne was likewise on his feet in an instant, his fingers feeling the coarse wooden handle of his belt knife—his other hand grasping his rifle.

But the savage paused.

"My brother, the White Leopard, should know his place when he walks the war-path with a Mingo chief!" he muttered.

"And the white Leopard wishes the Wild Hawk to know that he is as good as any painted red-skin west of the Blue Mountains, and that he is ready and willing at any time and under any circumstances, to prove his word!" was the hot rejoinder of the white man.

A wild fierce fire leaped to the Indian's eyes—a terrible frown wrinkled his brow, and clutching his tomahawk with a sudden grip, he once more strode forward. But again Wild Hawk paused. Rude, cruel, barbarous and untutored as he was, yet the Indian had control of himself.

"'Tis well, my brother! There are many dogs which bark loudly; but—they fail to bite! Oo-lum-lah has promised the great father at Williamsburg to conduct you *safely* through the unfriendly tribes to our village on the Scioto. Oo-lum-lah never broke his word. He has thus far conducted you in safety; and a watchful band of twenty Mingo braves are still on the further side of the Big River to guard the path we have trod. Their camp-fires, White Leopard, are now lit in a hostile land, for your safety. We will talk no more *now*. When the Wild Hawk's mission has been accomplished—when my white brother has smoked the pipe, and told his tale to our people, then, should he choose to stand before Oo-lum-lah, and say brave words, the time and the place shall not be

wanting. But not now, my brother ; Oo-lum-lah was raised a chief—he made himself a warrior!"

Without deigning further to notice the infuriated white man, except to wave him back with a warning gesture of the hand, the tall Indian approached his prisoner, and unfastened the thong which bound him to the tree. Then turning toward Derrick Thorne, he said :

"The Leaping Deer is captive to the Wild Hawk ! Oo-lum-lah is responsible for his keeping, and he will defend him with his life, should the time come."

The disguised white man made no reply.

Then leaving the fire to die out of its own accord, the party was once again soon in motion.

Slowly the day declined, and at length when the sun had set, the party again halted. Roydon Howe was now panting heavily ; he could not have held out a half-hour longer. Then the cheery camp-fire was lit, and preparations made for getting supper. They were now far away from the Ohio, and no longer feared pursuit.

Then, one by one, the party laid down. Wild Hawk, after firmly securing the hunter to a stout tree, gave him a blanket.

Soon every eye was closed in slumber, and Roydon Howe, though bound with thongs, and lying in the midst of those thirsting for his blood, slept sweetly and peacefully. But the youngs man's dreams were distorted ; one of them was especially dark.

The young man shook like a leaf ; a wild shudder swept over his frame, and as he uttered a half-moaning sob, he opened his eyes.

He started wildly and sat up on his elbow.

Bending over him, knife in hand, was Derrick Thorne ; and his face, showing dimly in the gloomy air, was distorted with rage—his eyes flashing fire, his mouth, fringed by its heavy stiff mustache—was wet with frothing foam.

The prisoner started to his feet, at the same time shrinking away, as far as his bonds would let him.

"Breathe a word, Roydon Howe, and I'll drive this knife into your heart !" hissed the fellow, at the same time raising his hand. The steel twinkled in the dim light ; but the

prisoner flinched not. He had seen danger many times before. Besides this, he knew that a word from him would summon Wild Hawk to his aid.

"Ay, Derrick Thorne! you speak boldly! Ah! I know that you are a brave man and can strike lustily, when your foe is bound! Ay! your knife has already drank the blood of—"

"By heavens! boy—I'll teach you to forget *some things!*!" furiously interrupted the man, springing forward and raising his glittering knife on high.

CHAPTER VI.

WHISTLING DICK TOSSES ITS LEAD.

RAPIDLY the old hunter urged the boat backward into the heavy gloom by the bank.

Red Belt had seen the broad flash of light which had startled old Sampson, and without showing any emotion, quietly took up his rifle.

The bright glare had streamed from a clump of bushes directly on the point of land at the south-east junction of the two rivers, the Ohio and the Great Kanawha. The rays were partly screened on both sides and to the rear, but not at all on the water front.

Old Sampson sat perfectly motionless for a moment. Then he said, in a cautious tone:

"The forest is full of our foes, my brother—*red-skins*. I fear that troublous times have again come upon us. And now, we'll be hardly safe at the cave. We've no troops, and when we get 'em, they're precious little account! Depend upon it, that conceited, tyrannical Governor of ours down at Williamsburg, has something to do with this."

There was a pause for some minutes—the Indian replying by simply bowing his head, in the scalp-lock of which was stuck a long gray eagle's feather.

"Haven't you any thing to say, Red Belt?" asked the old

hunter, after a pause. The young Indian slowly shook his head.

“My white brother, the Lean Wolf, is right,” he said, at length. “The pipe of peace has been extinguished, the tomahawk and hatchet dug up, and the feathered arrow shot high in the air. The red-men of the forest are abroad, and the braves from beyond the Big River are treading the war-path. We shall have work before us, and not a moon will come and go before these old woods will ring with the war-whoop and the whistling of rifle-balls. We must be speedy in our movements, for an army of white braves will come hither, and we may be of use to them in many ways, my brother.”

“Ay, Red Belt, and there’s rascality afoot! We *could* keep peace with the tribes easy enough, if that infernal Governor would let us, and them, alone. However, I suppose that is treason, so, enough said! But, Red Belt,” and the old hunter’s voice was serious at once, “we—you and I—have trouble ahead of us. The river is not so wide here but that a rifle-shot would find its way across; and the flash from the camp-fire on the point there spreads far out over the water. But we must go by! We must cross the Ohio to-night! Roydon Howe is dear to both of us, for he has risked his life for us more than once, and we will not desert him now. No! not if we have to face and fight the whole Scioto village!”

“Red Belt, in a trying hour, has never turned his back on friend or foe, and he’ll not do so now,” was the reply the young Indian made.

“I know it well, my brother! Wait here until I return; I’ll creep around and have a look at that camp-fire,” and the old man arose.

“No, my brother,” said the other, arising at once to his feet, “Red Belt is far younger than the Lean Wolf. This work can be done as well by him. Red Belt is not noisy on the war-path or trail. *He’ll* go. Let the great hunter stay here.”

The young brave dropped his blanket into the canoe, and stepping ashore, was soon lost in the gloom of the woods. His footsteps gave forth no sound as he trod cautiously onward.

The old hunter remained in the boat. Not a sound could

be heard save the wash of the river flowing by and the sad sighing of the wind through the trees. Old Sampson Lowe leaned back and rested his arm on the edge of the boat. And then a strange train of thought came into the old man's mind, as he sat there in the black night, with the wind moaning softly around him, and the wavelets rippling gently against the sides of the canoe.

A dark, trooping band of old-time remembrances was sweeping through the hunter's memory, and for a time he was living over again the long-ago past.

The moments sped by, and still Red Belt came not.

The old hunter's head gradually sunk down upon his breast, and his hand fell by his side.

Red Belt, after leaving the boat, crept cautiously onward, until he reached the summit of a slight knoll. Here he paused, and parting the bushes, peered ahead; but he could see nothing save a dull-red glimmer, some distance in front. The Indian looked around him, and then lightly securing his rifle to his back, sunk upon his knees and began to creep forward again, at times dragging himself painfully through the bushes.

He continued thus for some moments. Suddenly, as he reached a certain spot, he ceased his efforts and remained perfectly still; for just then a broad glare of light burst upon his vision, and almost blinded him. He remained quiet and gazed on for several moments.

Not twenty paces ahead of him a party of Mingo warriors in feathers and paint, were seated around the fire, cooking their evening meal. On all sides of them walked wakeful sentinels, armed with bow, quiver and rifle. The red-men were conversing in a low tone—so low, indeed, that nothing but an indistinct, guttural murmur could be heard.

The young warrior gazed silently on for a few moments, and then, dragging himself slowly around, commenced to retrace his steps. Slowly he progressed. At length he arose to his feet, and glided noiselessly away back toward the canoe.

Suddenly a dull, heavy report rung on the air, then, from ahead of him, came the fierce, angry growling of a jaguar. Red Belt darted like wind through the bushes.

We left the old hunter leaning his hand on the edge of the

boat, his head upon his breast, as dark thoughts in rapid succession were traveling through his brain. Suddenly he heard a twig snap behind him.

It must be remembered that the canoe had been driven hard up on the shore, and that now, by the see-saw action of the water, gently yet constantly rolling in, it had gradually worked itself *alongside*, and parallel to the bank.

The hunter turned his head quickly, expecting to see Red Belt; but he had scarcely changed his position, when, all at once, the bushes were hurled rudely apart, and an immense jaguar rushed down upon him. Before the old backwoodsman could snatch his rifle, the powerful beast, evidently ravenous from hunger, was upon him; its claws digging down into his shoulder, its teeth clutching him by the back of the neck.

By a mighty effort the old hunter tore his arm away, and, caring nothing for the proximity of his foes, he jerked his heavy pistol from his belt, placed it quickly to the animal's side, and fired.

But the ball did not penetrate a vital organ; it struck a rib, and glancing, tore through one of the fore-legs, at its junction with the body. The infuriated beast gave a howl of rage, and fastened its teeth deeper in the shoulder and back of the hunter.

Old Sampson Lowe was accustomed from boyhood to fight with beasts and savages, but never before had he stood so near to death. His right arm was now nerveless with pain, and he could not use his left, though he made a desperate effort to get his knife out.

The bloodthirsty animal now and then uttered a low growl, and viciously tore at the unprotected neck of the old man. The hunter was rapidly becoming exhausted from loss of blood. As well as he could, he still fought the jaguar, but his efforts were growing feebler and his brain was reeling.

Backward he sunk slowly, still holding up to the unequal fight. Just then a rifle-crack, sharp and clear, echoed on the air, and old Sampson Lowe felt the wind of the whizzing bullet, as it crashed entirely through the skull and brain of the jaguar, and shot on. In an instant, with a low, gurgling growl, the beast loosed its hold, and fell backward out of the

boat. At the same time, old Sampson sunk forward on his face, in a swoon.

A moment more and Red Belt—his rifle smoking in his hands—sprung through the bushes. One glance, and, stooping, he gave the canoe a vigorous shove from the shore, and leaped in. The impetus imparted to the boat, shot it far out into the stream, and well beyond the shadow of the trees.

The young Indian was not too soon in this movement, for the savages had heard the report, first, of the pistol—then of the rifle, and with wild halloos sprung to their feet, and started in the direction whence the sound of the fire-arms proceeded; and, in a moment after the canoe had darted out from the bank, a half-score of the red-skins stood on the muddy shore.

The moon suddenly glinted down its silver sheen, and spread its splendor full upon the waters. But the boat had now rounded a heavy clump of trees fringing the margin of the river, and for the time, was lost to view. The Indians, however, saw and marked the trembling wake left by the light craft, and with a loud whoop they sprung onward, following the ripple as it curved around the shore.

In the mean time, Red Belt had hastily stepped aft over the form of the motionless hunter, whose bleeding wounds, Eagle—who had fought the jaguar bravely—was licking. Seating himself he took the paddle, and with rapid strokes drove the canoe through the water. On he darted, and then like a night-hawk, the canoe sprung through the broad flash of light flung from the camp-fire on the shore.

Instantly a dozen rifles cracked, and a half-dozen bow-strings twanged sharp in the still night, and in a moment the air was vocal with whizzing bullets and feathered shafts. But the missiles of death fled harmlessly over the head of the daring brave, who was struggling so manfully to save his friend; and then in a moment more the canoe was out of the reflection from the fire, and in comparative security again.

Red Belt bent to his work. There before him, now lay the broad bosom of the Ohio, and then the light boat was tossing upon the troubled waters. The wind was blowing cheerily down the wide river, and flinging the rolling waves wildly about. But the canoe, protected as it was by the rude leeboards

and guided by the skillful hand of the young Tuscarora, rode well the heavy swells.

And now the boat was far out upon the water—its prow pointed onward. Still old Sampson Lowe lay motionless, half recumbent in the bottom of the boat, and the faithful Eagle stood over him, or rather crouched closely to him, now and then sniffing wistfully at the old man's cold, almost bloodless face.

Red Belt paid no heed to either; his face was stern, and his eye gleamed steadily into the gloom ahead. Suddenly he paused in his exertions and bent his ear. An ominous, unmistakable sound had been borne to him over the bosom of the water—a sound he did not like to hear.

He had heard the quick, regular sweep of several paddles, and a rushing sound as of a boat rapidly cleaving the waves. He glanced behind him, and peered steadily back in the gray gloom astern.

The moon had now sailed behind a heavy cloud-bank, and a dead, leaden gloom rested over the water. But Red Belt, after looking steadily a moment, started and uttered a low, deep exclamation.

Not a hundred yards astern was a long black object moving swiftly in his wake, and evidently overhauling him, moment by moment. Along with that object the young Indian had likewise distinctly seen in it, a dim array of dusky figures. Beyond a doubt it was an Indian canoe, and it contained at least eight or ten warriors. Red Belt knew this.

All this time the Tuscarora's boat was motionless, or rather, having lost headway, was drifting down the current of the black river. The Indian hesitated no longer. The pause had rested him—given him time to breathe.

Snatching the paddle he drove it into the water. A few strokes, and the light craft was bounding over the billows like an arrow.

The race was a desperate one, and the odds were fearful. The Tuscarora had thews of steel and lungs of leather; but he could not stand up under such work; he could not hope to escape the pursuers who hung so persistently behind.

On came the long black canoe—clearer and clearer resounded the splash of the paddles—more fearfully close echoed the rushing, cleaving dash of the boat through the trembling water.

Red Belt glanced behind him. Then quick as lightning he dropped the paddle by his side—stooped, grasped his rifle, turned in his seat, flung the piece to his face, and steadyng it for a moment, fired. The echoing ring of the fire-arms sounded sharp on the wide water, and the bright flash for a moment lit up the surrounding gloom.

Instantly there came a wild shout of defiance from the boat which pursued, and then a shower of singing balls.

Red Belt then knew that his bullet had missed its mark. He did not hesitate. Reaching down he clutched the long, slender-barreled weapon of the old hunter, and rising to his feet, steadied himself for a moment. Then quick as lightning he flung the terrible weapon to his face, his eye blazed through the sights, until the dark muzzle had covered the black object hovering astern.

Then he pulled the trigger.

Scarcely had the clear, shrill report rung on the night-air, before there came back a maddened chorus of demoniac yells, and then a wild death-shriek.

"That's better, Red Belt! You've chucked the lead into a chief, or my name is not Sampson Lowe! Whistling Dick, if aimed right, can not lie! that is to say, under three-quarters of a mile."

Red Belt turned and saw the old hunter sitting up on his elbow.

CHAPTER VII.

ON THE TRAIL.

AGAIN the wild chorus of mingled yells and shouts swelled over the water, and then the scattering fire of a half-dozen rifles rung on the air. Red Belt sunk down into the canoe as he saw the little jets of flame. The bullets sung harmlessly over him, and struck in the water far ahead.

The young Indian lost no time; he grasped his paddle and again urged the boat forward. The light craft was soon well under weigh, and skimming the waters again. Old Sampson,

now fully recovered from his fainting fit—which had been induced by sheer loss of blood—leisurely drew toward him the two empty rifles, and reloaded them. Then he placed them so that the flying spray would not fall on them, and turning about seated himself steadily in the bottom of the boat; then he grasped a paddle.

Red Belt did not say nay; he was well aware that the old hunter knew what was right. So he simply retained his own seat, and urged the canoe forward, steering with the paddle at the same time.

On they dashed over the dark waters—not a word being spoken, and no sound breaking on the air, save the mournful splash of the waves striking the sharp bows of the canoe, and the whispering of the night-wind over the bosom of the tossing river.

No sounds came from the pursuing boat, now. Just after the fatal shot from Whistling Dick, the large canoe had stopped in its onward course; and after the wild outburst had subsided, the Indians had quietly taken their paddles, and turning the boat back, toward the eastern bank, commenced to recross the river. The canoe containing them was soon lost in the gloom.

Old Sampson and Red Belt paused not once in their work, but drove their light craft straight across. After nearly an hour's hard pulling, they reached the opposite shore.

Only a few minutes elapsed before the hardy hunters had debarked and drawn the canoe ashore, well under a cliff which overhung the river-bank. Then they capsized it, covered it with bushes and secured it firmly.

Old Sampson then crept down to the river-bank, and seated himself near the edge, while Red Belt set to work to wash away the clotted blood from the old man's shoulder, and examine the wound made by the jaguar's teeth.

It was found that the flesh had been torn away considerably, but that the animal's teeth had not sunk deep.

Red Belt thoroughly cleansed the part with cold water, and then covered the wound lightly with a cooling ointment which he took from a bag in his pouch.

After resting a moment or so, the old hunter expressed himself as feeling much better of the scratch, as he termed it

The two men then divided the bag of provisions between them, placing each his parcel in his pouch. Then they turned off at once from the spot—Eagle following closely behind them. But they did not enter the great gloomy forest, upon the confines of which they now stood ; they turned, however, at once, to the left, and hurried on, down the shelving bank of the river.

As they proceeded, their steps became slower and slower, and then the old hunter paused, and leaning down examined the shingly shore, with a keen, scrutinizing eye. Red Belt looked quietly on.

"We can not be far from the spot they landed at, my brother," said the old man in a low voice, after a pause, and after what seemed an unsuccessful search. "I know the way well—I've traveled it afore to-day ! Ay, in all weathers too—as often by starlight as by sunlight. But—ha ! What is it, Eagle ?" and the old man paused as the dog uttered a low, deep note—not exactly a growl, but more like a plaintive whine.

The hunter watched the animal closely. The dog did not move from his tracks, but lifting his head in the air, sniffed keenly with his nose in all directions. The wind was sweeping up the bank ; and, at last, in this direction, the dog held his nose, pointing steadily forward.

Then he uttered another mournful howl, so faint and guarded, that it could just be heard above the sighing of the wind.

"Eagle has found *him* out !" the hunter muttered ; "the darned crittur knows that poor Roy has been *here*. Thank God, that the boy ain't dead ! That he is not, is certain ; Eagle has no nose for any thing—save a beast—that is struck by death."

Red Belt moved forward a pace, following the direction as indicated by the dog. Then the Indian suddenly stooped—then crept on several paces further, and again stooped down more closely still, and gazed at the ground by his feet. At last, rising, he pointed to the oozy beach.

"The dog is right, great hunter ; the Mingo canoe landed here ; you can see its mark on the sand there. And here," pointing again, "are many moccasin-prints—among them that of the Leaping Deer. Our brother is not injured, for his step is steady and heavy."

Old Sampson walked to the spot, and bent down ; he gazed at the tell-tale spots only a moment or so. He arose.

"Yes, Red Belt," he said, exultantly, "and all is well. We'll find the big canoe now, and knock a hole in the bottom. If we do not, the boat may serve us a bad turn, soon."

So saying, and as if thoroughly satisfied where the boat was concealed, the old man trod straight to the hostile canoe. A few blows with the slender, keen-edged hatchet—which he carried in his belt—over the bottom of the boat, and in a moment a large block was cut out nicely. This the old hunter replaced, so that at first view, it could not be seen ; but so loosely inserted was it, that it would be forced out on a moderate pressure of water.

The old hunter laughed low as he turned off.

"Come, Red Belt, we must be gone," he said ; "we have a long and dangerous tramp ahead. Time will not wait ; before the dawn we must be far from this. But," he suddenly paused, "if Roydon Howe was alive, and had the use of his feet, he has left us a message somewhere, that's certain. We'll search."

He at once got on his hands and knees and commenced groping around, scrutinizing every blade of grass—every twig—every pebble, every piece of bark. Red Belt did the same.

The search continued for some minutes, and then the old hunter silently drew his companion toward him, and pointed to two small flowers—the one bent carelessly, yet evidently intentionally, over the other. The little stalks showed very faintly in the dim gloaming ; but the trapper, with the eye of a hawk, had noted them.

"We have heard from the dear boy," he said, in a low whisper. "He has faith in us ; he tells us that thus far he has not been harmed, and that he longs to be with us again. He *shall* be, or, my brother, old Sampson's life will be the forfeit! Now, we'll be gone. Come, Eagle, keep your ears open."

As the hunter spoke, he turned at once—having in the mean time risen to his feet—and slinging his long rifle in the hollow of his arm, he strode away in a course at right-angles to the river. Red Belt followed on swiftly and silently. Eagle trod behind the two, his step as noiseless as theirs.

Another moment and the silent party had passed into the

deep shade, and were swallowed up in the gloom of the sleeping forest.

We will now return to the Indian camp far in advance of the other party and a day ahead of the events just described.

It will be remembered that Roydon Howe, helpless and unprotected, was confronting Derrick Thorne, the disguised settler, and that the latter in a moment of blinding passion, had sprung upon the prisoner, threatening him with a naked knife

For an instant Roydon Howe quailed; but it was only for an instant.

"Ay, Derrick Thorne! 'Tis worthy of you! Strike an unarmed—a defenseless, a *pinioned* man! Strike, I say, coward and murderer! It will become your reputation and your prowess!"

The other paused and glared at the man who thus openly defied him. His eyes seemed to burn down into the very bosom of the prisoner, and his mouth foamed and frothed as he gritted his teeth fiercely together.

Then he gripped the knife more firmly, and prepared for the spring. But still he hesitated.

"Ha! has your high courage gone so soon, bully and *blood-hound*? Ay, you are afraid to attack a man who is bound with deer-thongs! a man from whose face you would flee like a whipped cur, were *his* hands as free as yours! Perhaps the remembrance—ah, God!—of an old woman's gray hairs dabbled in blood—of an old woman, whose breast, hacked and thrust—"

"Enough! enough, man! You will drive me mad! Were you a thousand times defenseless as you are now, I would cut your accursed throat, and thus rid myself of you, my Black Shadow—forever hunting me wherever I go! Now, Roydon Howe, quick with your prayers, for your hour is come!"

And with a mad, ungovernable howl of rage, the man dashed upon his victim. In a moment he had grasped the captive viciously by the throat. Then, with a movement like lightning, he raised again his keen knife in the air.

Another moment and Thorne was hurled backward over the remains of the camp-fire, through the bushes beyond.

With a howl of rage the man quickly sprung to his feet; but Wild Hawk—his own swarthy features now dark and terrible to look upon, met him half-way. Involuntarily Derrick

Thorne paused before the fierce, commanding port of the haughty red-man; involuntarily, too, he drew back and cowered before the eagle glance of the dark warrior.

"Does the White Leopard long to tread the untrod journey to the hunting-grounds in the sky? Does he dare step between yonder pale-face captive and Oo-lum-lah, the brave? Better that a sweeping herd of buffaloes had galloped over his body the whole day, than for the White Leopard to brave the Wild Hawk to his face! Oo-lum-lah has pledged his word to the great father, the Governor, that he would escort the White Leopard safely to the Scioto villages. Could he recall his promise, White Leopard's miserable life would not be worth the asking for! Shame on you, man of a coward's heart! Shame on you, white-livered pale-face, who would strike a pale-face brother when his hands are tied! But enough! When the villages are reached, Wild Hawk's mission will be finished. Then the White Leopard can seek him out—can seek out Oo-lum-lah, the Mingo brave, who calls you dog and coward!"

Derrick Thorne had gradually recovered himself as the chief was speaking; and when Oo-lum-lah had ended with the withering words above, the white man suddenly stooped, snatched his rifle, and aimed at the towering form of the proud Indian. But just as his finger was pressing the trigger, Roydon Howe, with a sudden movement, ran under the deadly rifle, and threw it up with his head. The weapon exploded, and the bullet went crashing through the trees above.

Chagrined, and now completely infuriated, the villain clubbed his rifle, and made a fearful, swinging stroke with it, fall at the prisoner. But, that stroke did not reach him for whom it was intended; for, in the twinkling of an eye, the rifle was stopped by the brawny interposing arm of Wild Hawk. Another moment, and grasping the weapon in his own giant hands, he wrenched it from Thorne, hurled it against a tree, breaking the stock to atoms, and then he strode to the discomfited white man.

In an instant the chief had snatched his bow from his back, and placing an arrow on the string, drew back the feathered shaft, until the keen bush of jagged flint scratched the temple of Derrick Thorne.

But, Wild Hawk paused. He turned the bow aside.

"No, no!" he muttered, "the word of a Mingo *must not* be broken. No, not even for the deadly insult he may receive from a white-livered pale-face! Your life is yours, White Leopard; but, you had better been born a squaw than to have braved the Wild Hawk thus!"

Then, as he turned scornfully away, he strode to the side of Roydon Howe, and laying his large hand upon the young man's shoulder, he said—using the Tuscarora dialect—in a guttural voice:

"Wild Hawk has a heavy hand, and what some have called a wicked heart; but, though his skin is red—though his blood is hot—though his tomahawk is raised against the pale-face braves who would take away our lands, yet Oo-lum-lah will not forget *you*. He will not forget that the Leaping Deer saved the Wild Hawk's life, which yon renegade dog would have taken! Remember that the Wild Hawk is now, if not your friend, certainly not your foe."

When he had finished speaking, the tall chief gazed gratefully at the prisoner, and then, half-sorrowfully, at his bound hands. But, shaking his head, he turned away once more, toward Derrick Thorne, who now stood toying nervously with the handle of his knife. It was evident the villain was cowed.

"As for you, White Leopard," continued Wild Hawk, in a low, hissing voice, "you can not longer be trusted; we will see that your treachery shall not harm us. Be ready, my brother."

As he spoke he made a sign to his companion—the other Indian—who, during this disturbance, had risen to his feet, and who, stolidly yet keenly watching his chief all the time, had stood, rifle in hand, expectant and observant.

As the chief uttered the words above, this other Indian dropped his rifle and darted upon Derrick Thorne. The attack was followed by Wild Hawk. Before the man could defend himself, he was hurled rudely to the ground, and his arms pinioned securely behind him. But he suffered no further indignity.

Derrick Thorne raved and swore until Wild Hawk summarily put an end to the disturbance by passing a belt of

wampum over the man's mouth, thus effectually gagging him.

Again the little encampment was wrapped in quiet, and naught could be heard but the sighing of the wind amid the thick branches of the trees, and the sad creaking of the boughs as they rubbed together.

Roydon Howe slept as sweetly and as securely the remainder of the night as he had ever done in his dear old cave.

Once only during the night had he started and turned in his sleep. This was when the long and preternaturally terrible howl of a famished wolf echoed suddenly through the deep glades of the forest.

Roydon Howe then had half sprung to his elbow. He bent his ear and listened keenly. But the wild, unearthly cry came no more; and a shade of doubt and anxiety passed over the young hunter's face as he again laid down.

The prisoner's movement had not been unobserved. Wild Hawk had likewise heard the scream of the wolf, and he too had noiselessly raised up and listened. Then, as he saw the prisoner in a similar attitude, the warrior softly drew to him his rifle; then a grim, defiant smile flashed over his face.

Oo-lum-lah did not close his eyes again that night.

CHAPTER VIII.

TIDINGS.

ERE the sun had risen on the following morning, the camp was astir. Wild Hawk awoke each one. Then, with his own hands he unbound the white man, Derrick Thorne; but he kept him under his eye all the time. In ten minutes the party had gone.

Late that night, just as the pale, wan moon was climbing over the tops of the moaning pines, Wild Hawk's party entered the village on the Scioto. The warrior, despite the lateness of the hour, bent his way toward the large lodge standing in the center of the Indian town. This lodge-tent was

occupied by the old chief who ruled the several tribes congregated there.

Old Sampson Lowe and Red Belt, whom we have left far behind, continued undeviatingly in their course. When the day dawned—not the one the night of which Wild Hawk and his companions entered the village—they were far away from the broad river behind them, and were well advanced into the enemy's country. But these two hardy men cared not for danger. They had an object in view; that object they would accomplish, or sacrifice life itself.

Old Sampson Lowe—who now had forgotton all about his wounded shoulder—rubbed his hands with delight and chuckled low to himself as the trail was readily found. He was now satisfied that he was not wrong; he was satisfied, too, that, as smart as had been the others, he and Red Belt were not far behind them. The tracks were fresh, and only half-covered with dew, showing that the impressions had been made long after nightfall.

The old hunter and his companion halted by a bubbling spring, which flowed from beneath the base of a large rock, and seated themselves. But they did not build a fire; they dared not do so. They were content with their jerked venison and coarse bread, already prepared for their use. This with draughts from the sparkling spring at their feet amply supplied them.

When the meal was over, the two hunters stretched themselves on the earth, and were soon oblivious in slumber—Eagle taking his place in their midst, likewise—sleeping now, waking now, and watching as a faithful sentinel should.

Several hours passed; the sun was now high in the heavens, and careering toward the zenith.

The young Indian awoke and gently touched his companion. Old Sampson was soon aroused, and then upon his feet. The two lingered not, but turned at once to the trail again.

On they strode.

Then the sun gradually sunk behind the dark, shadow-crowned mountains, and gloom and dreariness grew apace over the silent woods.

Then the last shade of scarlet-and-purple faded from the

sky, and a dismal, and as yet, moonless night settled down. Still the hardy pioneers strode on—but their pace was slow. For it was now necessary to stop every few moments and examine the trail, which at times, and in certain places, was almost obscured. But they did not halt.

At length they entered a thick, tangled brake. Here the trail was, for awhile, completely obliterated.

The friends briefly consulted together, and, after a moment's hesitation, pushed straight on. It was getting late, but as yet the moon had not risen.

Suddenly Eagle stopped as if shot, and uttered a low, angry growl—his stiff hair bristling threateningly on his back—his keen nose pointed forward.

Old Sampson halted, and in an instant his thumb was upon his rifle-hammer. Red Belt peered ahead. The men looked around them silently, in every direction, but they did not move their bodies at all.

Again and again the dog uttered deep, venomous growls; and then he crept stealthily forward, and was about passing the hunter, when he again stopped and sniffed the air. The animal was trembling violently, and he seemed about collecting his energies for a spring.

"There's danger, Red Belt," muttered Old Sampson, in a voice just above a whisper; "but Eagle tells the tale: 'tis no red-skin, but some varmint. I never yet—"

"'Sh! 'sh! my brother; do not move, if your life is still worth something to you. Wait, wait till I unsling my bow. Now. Slowly—lower—lower—your head!"

In an instant, a bow-string twanged sharp in the air, and a whistling arrow brushed like lightning through the very hair of the hunter, who had not moved an inch to the right or left. It darted on, on its errand of death.

A dull, crashing thud—then a heavy, rustling fall, and Red Belt, knife in hand, rushed by. A moment, and he stood over the writhing, death-tortured form of an immense panther. One quick sweep with the knife and the beast straightened out, and with a few convulsive kicks, turned upon its back. It was dead. Red Belt's arrow had gone through the animal's brain, entirely transfixing it, skull and all.

They pushed on. The brake was at last passed, and once

again the two stood on hard ground. The trail was soon found, and the hunters trod swiftly on.

The moon was now creeping slowly up, and then at last, her silver splendor gleamed down into the black shades of the forest. The trail was now very distinct : broken boughs, well beaten turf, and bent flowers and grass, making it unmistakable.

And the trail was not an hour old.

The old hunter paused ; his frame was trembling from excitement.

"Ha ! So fresh !" he exclaimed.

As he spoke, he bent down and picked up a broken twig. He held it high, so that the moon should shine directly upon it. The sap was still exuding slowly from the broken end.

"We are close upon them, my brother, and Sampson *must* tell his boy that the old man is near at hand ; that he is on the war-path ; that his blood is leaping hot for him !"

As he spoke he placed his hands to his mouth, and uttered a long, piercing cry. The woods, so still and sleeping around them, rung and rung again, the wild reverberation flinging back in a grand, seemingly ceaseless echo, the fierce, defiant scream. Then all again was still.

The hunter and his companion, examining their weapons, and then wrapping their blankets snugly around them, sat down back to back, and again sought peace, strength and rest, in sleep—the faithful dog, as ever, crouching close to them.

The night sped on—then it waned. Then the coming day broke, and at last the sun burst over the trees and drove away the damp, noxious vapors which hung like a winding-sheet of mist over the forest.

Then old Sampson awoke with a start, and sprung to his feet. He glanced quickly at the sun ; then he shook his head, as an uneasy, anxious frown passed over his face.

"Awake, Red Belt ! Awake, my brother ! we're late !" he muttered.

In a moment Red Belt was wide awake ; and in ten minutes the two men had finished their morning meal—eaten not as a luxury, but as a means of giving blood, muscle and strength. Then striking the broad trail, they strode swiftly away. They were soon lost in the shade of the mighty trees of the forest.

An hour passed—then another. Then the old hunter suddenly paused, and parting the bushes, peered ahead.

Just before him, on a small, open plateau of ground, were the smoldering remains of a fire, the dull blue smoke curling up lazily even then from the half-dead coals. Around this many moccasin-prints could be seen, and the leavings of a meal. To one side, on the edge of the reeds which clustered around the little patch of sward, was the shattered stock of a rifle, and near it the barrel, bent out of shape and useless.

Old Sampson pointed slowly through the bushes at this sight, and then beckoning Red Belt to follow him, he stepped out into the plateau and gazed around him. Then he stooped and picked up the bent rifle-barrel. Then he proceeded to examine it.

The old hunter started violently, and as he turned the large bore toward him, to get a good look at the rifled grooves, a grim, revengeful smile passed over his face.

"A bad omen for you, Derrick Thorne!" he muttered, softly. "You've met with trouble, and — you'll meet with more! . . . I know this wepon—a dangerous one, too! But its day has passed; and *your* day is passing, Derrick Thorne; and soon the sun will set upon you! Well—well!"

As he uttered the last words, he raised the heavy rifle-barrel and flung it far into the reeds, where it sunk out of sight in the dark ooze.

Suddenly Red Belt started. Something on the grass had caught his attention. He picked it up, and glanced over it. It was a small square of buck-skin, dotted here and there closely with small indentations.

"We have tidings from our brother, the Leaping Deer," said the young Indian, quietly, at the same time handing the square to old Sampson.

One glance over it, and the old hunter, as he received it from the other, uttered an exclamation of joy and relief.

"He is safe! safe thus far, my brother, and the Leaping Deer gives us strange news! Listen; I will tell you what he says:" and the old man, in a low, tremulous voice, deciphered Roydon Howe's "letter."

"May God help my poor boy too!" muttered the old hunter,

after a pause, when he had finished the letter ; and for an instant tears dimmed his eyes, and they dropped upon his long, white beard.

" Ay ! I'll heed you, Roydon ! For once I'll spare the Wild Hawk, should he come under my rifle ; I'll spare him—once ! "

The young Tuscarora bowed his head in silence. Then the two, after another glance around them, hurried away, their faces still toward the sunset. They strode rapidly on.

But the trail grew colder, and the old hunter, with a sorrowful shake of his head, knew that his drowsiness that morning had been fatal to his success. He knew that Wild Hawk's party was now far ahead, and that it would be impossible to overhaul them before they reached the village. But still, he and Red Belt did not pause.

Late that night, only a half-hour after Wild Hawk's party had arrived at their destination, two shadowy figures, followed by the faint shape of a gigantic dog—in fact, all showing colossal in the hazy moonlight—skirted quickly to the rear of the Indian village, and disappeared in the dense forest that clustered over the silent Scioto.

CHAPTER IX.

OLD PICTURES.

IN that room was a scene for a painter.

An old woman with a heavenly face of calm, and scattered locks of silver, bent upon her knees, and with raised eyes and crossed hands, prayed softly. Before her lay an open letter, and on the chair by which she knelt, was a large bag. In it could be seen, shining through, the rich gleam of yellow gold.

Suddenly there came a low rap at the door. The old woman started. The rap sounded again, and again. The old woman arose to her feet, and moved fearingly toward the door. In an instant, three brawny men, their faces concealed,

burst into the room. The old woman reeled back and clutched the bag of gold.

Then a knife flashed and struck home. It was buried in an aged, withered breast.

The next morning a dirk-sheath was found in that room, alongside a dead old woman, whose white hair trailed in her own clotted gore.

That sheath had a name engraved upon it.

The last of the line was reached ; the contest was almost over. The Tuscarora was now heading for the dense timber-wood, but he could not hope to reach it. Only one brawny pursuer hung behind him ; the others had abandoned the race. Suddenly the poor fellow stumbled and dropped heavily to the earth.

A moment, and with a wild cheer, he who pursued stood over the fallen brave. The tomahawk, in a flashing circle of light, glittered in the moonbeams, and—

A faint puff of pale blue smoke curled over a clump of bushes ahead, and the sharp ring of a rifle echoed over the prairie. The Indian, whose note of exultation was scarcely from his lips, sprung in the air and fell backward, dead.

Then suddenly from the bushes a tall, lank form, darted out, recharging his rifle as he ran. In a moment he stood by the senseless Tuscarora. For a moment he gazed pityingly at him ; then sling his long rifle to his back, he clutched the Indian in his strong arms—slowly straightened up, and followed by his dog, strode away toward the black line of the forest.

And the Tuscarora's broad deer-skin belt was dyed a deep-red color in the gore, which had dashed upon him from the heart of his foe.

CHAPTER X.

MAN-E-WA-WA, THE TUSCARORA.

THAT night of the arrival of the prisoner in the Indian village on the Scioto, passed in quiet. As soon as Wild Hawk's party entered the place, they bent their way, as we have remarked, toward the lodge of the great chief—the ruler. When they emerged again from the presence of that personage, Roydon Howe, his hands still bound behind him, was led forth between the swarthy savages. They hurried the prisoner across the open ground in the village, until they had reached a solitary tent of skins stretched on the borders of the forest. They rudely thrust the young man in, and then bound his already pinioned hands to the pole which held the tent up. The cord, however, was long enough to allow him the privilege of lying down or walking around.

An old blanket and a buffalo-skin were flung in to him, and then the guards withdrew. But they did not leave the tent; up and down they walked, one in front, and another in the rear.

Roydon Howe, hungry and almost exhausted, sunk down at once, and leaning his head upon his hands, was soon asleep—resting his back against the tent-pole. How long he slumbered he knew not; but it must have been some hours, when he was suddenly awakened by a long, wild scream. It came from the depths of the woods, and seemed to be the cry of a famished wolf.

Roydon Howe listened intently. Then, before the echo of the terrible scream died away, another cry arose in the air. But it was unlike the other; it was the howl of the panther.

The young man almost sprung to his feet. He made a sudden desperate effort to break his bands. Then he was about to return the cry; but he checked himself, for he remembered his situation. He sunk down again, and there was a glad smile on his lips.

"Thank God!" he muttered. "They have not forgotten me, and there's hope yet! Ay, a bright hope!"

The crisis came no more. The sentinels had simultaneously paused as the screams rung from the forest; but after a moment's hesitation, they shook their heads, and resumed their monotonous rounds.

Roydon Howe glanced out through the flapping fly of the tent. The moon was sinking behind the waving tree-tops, and the open square was half gloomed over with a dark shade. As quick as was his glance, the prisoner saw a dim, shadowy figure, tall, ungainly and grotesque, creeping away on the extreme edge of the forest, and just within the heavy line of shade flung by the trees. In a moment, this phantom-like form was gone.

The young man trembled with excitement, nor did sleep again visit his eyes, that night. But the cries came no more, nor did the flitting form afterward appear.

The dark hour passed, and the dawn broke clear and beautiful over the Indian village. Very soon the place was astir. It was a day which had long been looked forward to, for in it the chiefs expected an ambassador, or *emissary* as we would call him, from the great father in the East, as Governor, Lord Dunmore was styled by the Indians.

The sun arose, and showered down its warm, golden rays over the village. At an early hour, bands of gayly-painted warriors were to be seen, passing toward the council-chamber or tent. On entering this solemn place, each warrior, as a sign of good faith, drew from his quiver an arrow and tossed it to the ground by the buffalo-skin opening, at which sat a stern brave, who scrutinized each one who came.

At length the council-lodge was filled. Then, as the wild, discordant sound of horns rung over the village, Derrick Thorne, wearing an officer's uniform, girded with sword and sash, and accompanied by a half-dozen chiefs richly attired in feathers and war-trappings, and hideously painted, marched toward the tent.

This white man, who had come, as history records it, on a bloody errand, was received by the dusky sentinel, standing. He soon entered the lodge. Scarcely had he disappeared with his gaudy escort, when an exceedingly tall savage, likewise in

war-paint and feathers, strode, bow in hand and quiver at back, to the opening of the tent. But the sentinel, who had let fall the skin, sternly thrust before the late-comer his spear, and warned him back.

"My brother has tarried too long. The great white brave from the rising sun, has entered, and the council-lodge is closed."

The man spoke in the harsh, deep guttural of the Mingoes, and he still kept his sharp spear presented.

The new-comer slightly recoiled; but then, raising his form to its loftiest height, he shook back his head, until the gay dress of eagle-feathers quivered violently in the air; then answered in the same dialect:

"My brother heeds well his duty, but he has forgotten that Man-e-wa-wa, the Tuscarora, can lift the skin, even when the great chief of the tribes is smoking."

The sentinel drew back in awe, and bowed low before the imperious savage.

The name of Man-e-wa-wa was powerful in the village, though, now, years had passed since he had come to the council-tent of the chiefs and warriors.

Then the sentinel, without hesitating, withdrew the spear; and the tall chief, leisurely plucking an arrow from his quiver, tossed it into the, now large, heap and entered.

His coming did not create special attention among those assembled, for all eyes were turned upon the form of Derrick Thorne.

Then the pipe was passed, and the council was regularly opened.

We do not purpose to give the proceedings of that council.

Wild Hawk, the Mingo, was present, and delivered a vehement harangue. Then he was thanked by the council for his bravery, skill and fidelity in bringing the envoy to the Scioto. But the Mingo chief made no allusion whatever to the encounter between the White Leopard and himself in the forest. When the council was over, however, the revengeful brave, passing close to the white man, whispered these unmistakable words in his ear:

"Now, Wild Hawk has done his whole duty, and his hands are untied. Now, he can say that the white brave is a dog and a

coward! Oo-lum-lah's lodge is readily found. The chief will be there, when the White Leopard seeks him."

With that, the savage strode out, jostling the other so rudely that the chiefs and warriors noticed his conduct.

But Wild Hawk suddenly paused, as, just then, the sinewy, towering form—taller by some inches than his own lofty figure—of the old Tuscarora, Man-e-wa-wa, brushed by him. The Mingo gazed keenly at the stately frame of the aged savage, and then as a deep shade—may be of suspicion—passed over his face, he gently touched the other, and said in a low tone :

"I, Oo-lum-lah, greet thee, my brother! Many moons have waned, many snows have fallen, since the great Man-e-wa-wa darkened the council-tent with his shadow; and yet, to-day he has not spoken, and his old-time words of honey and wisdom have not been heard."

The tall savage turned, though for an instant his frame slightly trembled.

"Oo-lum-lah, the Mingo brave, speaks words of truth," he said. "Many long seasons of shine and snow have gone by, since Man-e-wa-wa stood in the village. His home has been on the distant prairies, where his wigwam is stretched, and where he hunts for his squaw and pappooses. As for his eloquent speech, the day for that has passed too; for Man-e-wa-wa is now an old and a riven oak, and the wind through his branches makes not the music of old. The aged tree rears not its head, as in its spring-time and glory."

With that he was about to pass on, when the Mingo again spoke :

"Another council will be held to-day, my brother, after the sun has begun to fall. Oo-lum-lah, on his return from his mission to the great father, captured a young pale-face brave. He is known as the Leaping Deer. Perhaps Man-e-wa-wa has heard his name? This young brave hunts and fishes with the great warrior, the Leau Wolf, whose scalp we would hang in our lodges. The Leaping Deer will be put to the rack, unless he tells us where the Lean Wolf and the renegade brave, Red Belt, the Tuscarora, hide themselves from our sight. Will the great Man-e-wa-wa come to the council-tent, and see the pale-face break his faith, or suffer what few can

near?" and as he spoke, the Mingo eyed the other keenly and anxiously.

Man-e-wa-wa paused; but his stolid face, with its long mass of white beard, showed no trace of emotion. Then he answered, calmly:

"Man-e-wa-wa *will* be present. He would like to look upon this pale-face brave, whose name has reached even up to the lakes, beyond the rolling prairie. Now Man-e-wa-wa would walk hence. His lodge is near the river, and when Oo-lum-lah will come, he will find a pipe there, and a blanket to sit upon."

Without further word or gesture, the stately chief swept on in the direction he had indicated as being the situation of his lodge. For a moment, Wild Hawk gazed after him in silence, and then strode on as if to follow him. But shaking his head, he paused, and turning about, hurried away in an opposite direction.

Another was there too, who had noticed the tall form of the mighty chief. That was Dunmore's intriguing officer and messenger, Derrick Thorne, the ex-hunter. As he heard the words which passed between the two chiefs, he started. But marking the keen eye of Wild Hawk fastened upon him, he hastily turned and strode off to the lodge which was set apart for him.

Once within the tent, he flung himself on the skin, spread upon the ground, and was soon buried in thought.

But at length he straightened himself out upon the blanket, and, though the sun was now at meridian, was soon fast locked in slumber.

Late that afternoon, just before the sun was dipping behind the long blue edge of the far-away western mountains, the council-tent was again slowly filled; and, as before, toward the last of those who came, strode Man-e-wa-wa, the Tuscarora chieftain. His brow wore an anxious shade, and his step was rapid and heavy.

But, as soon as the old warrior had passed the skin at the entrance of the tent, and before he had seated himself in the dusky circle of solemn-faced braves, who sat on the floor of the council-tent, there was a calm, dignified composure about his face, and a steadiness in his movements, which was noticeable with him in the morning of this same day.

A few moments elapsed and not a word was spoken. Then suddenly, the mournful winding of a horn, and the solemn rolling of a drum was heard. Then at the rear of the tent, a skin was pushed aside, and the great chief and a dozen of his most distinguished warriors filed slowly in, and seated themselves on a separate spread of skins. Accompanying this mighty chieftain, was a beautiful maiden richly clad in feathers, and gaudy-colored cloth and wampum. But the girl's face wore a sad, anxious expression.

She seated herself by the great chief. She was his daughter—the wondrously beautiful Mis-kwa, the Red Sky of Morning.

The tall, stately chieftain, old Man-e-wa-wa, started violently as his eyes fell on the maiden's face; but in a second or so, the emotion passed away, and the great warrior was as stolid as ever.

Wild Hawk watched the old Tuscarora closely all the while, and then a grim, yet a doubting smile flashed for an instant over his painted face.

Just then the long, sad wail of a horn pealed in the air, and the skin by the tent-door was lifted.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE COUNCIL-TENT.

WHEN the skin was raised to its hight, a small group entered. That group consisted of Roydon Howe, the prisoner, and a guard of six warriors.

The young man glanced about him for a moment, and though he started at the grim array of stern-looking, dignified chiefs, who sat so solemnly around, yet he quailed not.

He was now standing just without the circle of braves and in front of the small dais covered with skins, upon which sat the chief, and his lovely daughter—Mis-kwa.

The young man stood still awaiting the pleasure of the council; his hands were bound tightly behind him. At that

instant Mis-kwa, who had been arranging the skins, looked up; her eyes fell upon the pale-face. Just then Roydon Howe obtained a look at the girl's face. Their eyes met. The prisoner started violently, as did the maiden; but in an instant, as a bright look passed between them, the girl placed her finger quick to her lips, and turned her head away. She looked not toward him again.

As quick, however, as had been the involuntary starting of the two—as quick as had been the intelligent glance between them, neither had escaped the keen eye of Oo-lum-lah, the Wild Hawk, who sat in the circle opposite the dais. A dark frown gathered on the warrior's brow, and a venomous fire shot from his red eyes. But no other traces of emotion were visible in him, and these passed partly away as the savage glanced again at the manly form of the prisoner.

A moment of silence passed, in which the stolid warriors bent their gaze sternly upon the prisoner. It was evident that Roydon Howe's manner had made a pleasing impression—one in his favor—in the grim circle.

There was only one face in that swarthy company which showed no emotion whatever; that was Man-e-wa-wa's. It is true the old man had glanced at the prisoner quickly and searchingly, as he was led in by the guard. That glance was fleeting, but it was close and scrutinizing.

And as the old chief quietly looked away, and although he saw, as he did so, the basilisk eyes of Wild Hawk fastened on him, yet a smile passed over his face.

At length the old chief on the dais, whose scarred face, and milk-white scalp-lock betokened that he had passed through many hard-fought fights, and had seen many changes of the moon and falls of snow, looked up and glanced at the prisoner. In that look there was nothing of kindness—nothing of soft-heartedness. But there was determination, cruel, vindictive, unmistakable. Then he glanced around the grim circle, and waving his hand arose slowly to his feet.

His speech was that ever-powerful appeal to the Indian passions—a recital of Indians' wrongs; and after stating the case of the prisoner's complicity in aggravating those wrongs, the old chief sat down, leaving to his braves to determine the white man's fate.

As the old Indian concluded, silence ensued. There were no signs either of approval or dissent.

Several moments passed thus, when suddenly a tall, hideously-painted warrior sprung to his feet, and brandishing for a moment, his war-club, began a wild harangue. He urged the immediate death of the prisoner—death without delay, without trial, without charges; but, *death*, because he was a pale-face! Then the warrior sat down.

Wild Hawk watched the face of Man-e-wa-wa most keenly during the delivery of this speech. But, the old Tuscarora's face showed no emotion; then the same dark shade came to Wild Hawk's.

A dozen had spoken, and a silence ensued. No one else seemed desirous to say any thing.

Suddenly Wild Hawk, the Mingo, glanced around, and then arose to his feet.

"It is not often, great Nin-neet-lah, and brothers, that the voice of Oo-lum-lah is heard in the councils of his people; for, as yet, compared to many here, he is young, and he draws back within himself, when he feels that he is standing in such a presence."

As he spoke, he bowed low. A hearty grunt of approval followed this; then all eyes were bent upon the sinewy figure of the Mingo brave.

"But, my brothers," he continued, "though many years may not have whitened Oo-lum-lah's hair—though only a half-score of winters have seen the Wild Hawk in the hunt—on the trail, and upon the war-path, yet, to-day he is not ashamed of his deeds; and he wears the feathers, paint and wampum of a chief of his tribe!"

He paused again, and a murmur of applause followed; in this, the long-absent chief, Man-e-wa-wa, joined with the rest. Wild Hawk saw it, and though he slightly started at first, he continued at once: "Therefore, my brothers, Oo-lum-lah knows that his voice can be raised in the council-lodge, and that his words will be heeded. Listen: when Oo-lum-lah turned his back at your bidding, and left his wigwam and his people, putting his face toward the rising of the sun, he did so with a proud heart, for he knew that he was trusted. With only one follower—he a Mingo—he plunged into the dark forests;

crossed the river; crept through the settlements of the pale-face in the Long Valley, and climbed the rocky sides of the Blue Mountains. Then, at last, he entered the great lodge of the white father in the East. All this Oo-lum-lah did; and then, with his tidings for the people, and with the pale-face messenger who was sent to treat with you, my brothers, Oo-lum-lah again set out on the path of peril. And he is here again. . . . My brothers," and he paused just an instant; " My brothers, I have heard you clamoring for the blood of this pale-face brave—the Wild Hawk's prisoner! Oo-lum-lah says nay! nay! Listen, my brothers: on the path through the dark woods there came an hour when the Leaping Deer sprung between the Wild Hawk and—*Death!*"

There was an exclamation of surprise, and then an audible murmur ran through the assembly. Old Man-e-wa-wa bent his gaze toward the prisoner. But the young man, though he listened intently, evidently did not understand a word. The dialect used was the Mingo.

After a moment, Wild Hawk, casting a softened glance toward the prisoner, proceeded:

" Yes, my brothers! the Leaping Deer, at the risk of his own life, saved that of Wild Hawk! No, no, my brothers! though his face be as pale as the moon on a winter night; though his father may have plowed over the graves of those dear to Oo-lum-lah; though his rifle may have been raised against Oo-lum-lah's life, yet the Wild Hawk *can not* cry for his blood! . . . He is called the Leaping Deer; let him prove that he owns the name justly. *Let the pale-face braves run the gantlet!* What say my brothers? and—" he suddenly asked, bending his burning gaze upon the Tuscarora chieftain, " what says Man-e-wa-wa, whose words all heed—whose judgment is ripened by the snows of many winters? The great warrior is with us in the council-tent to-day; let the braves of the tribes hear his voice, for from him they will learn wisdom."

With that, the Mingo took his seat.

Old Man-e-wa-wa started at first, but quickly bent his aged head, as if in homage to the assembly. Then, as all eyes were fixed upon him, he slowly rose to his feet, and leaned heavily upon his club. Again he bent his hoary head, in a low, sweep-

ing bow to the chiefs. Then in a moment he raised himself to his fullest height, and gazed proudly around him.

"Many moons have waxed and waned," he began, in a full, sonorous tone, speaking likewise in the Mingo dialect; "many snows have whitened the valleys and mountains; many times have the leaves fallen, and many times have the prairies been bare of grass since old Man-e-wa-wa stood in the council of the tribes and lifted his voice in speech. Man-e-wa-wa greets you, mighty Nin-neet-lah, and chiefs—he greets you as one meeting old friends and brothers—as one whose rifle has rung for you—whose tomahawk and scalping-knife have decked his lodge with battle-trophies! Man-e-wa-wa has listened, my brothers, to the words which have been spoken—has *listened well* to those spoken by the young but mighty Oo-lum-lah, the Wild Hawk of the Mingoes. The brave speaks from an old head, and his words should find high lodgment in your hearts. Cherish, and treat well, such a brave as the Wild Hawk, my brothers, for he has even now the strength of youth and the wisdom of gray hairs. Heed what he says, my brothers! Stain not your hands in the blood of the pale-face. But, as we can not be true to ourselves, and let the Leaping Deer go at once, order it to be done as the Wild Hawk says, that he run the gantlet."

There was certainly a change in the sentiments of the assembly; for a loud murmur, evidently of approval, followed the speech of the old Tuscarora.

Even Wild Hawk, whose blood leaped along in a torrent of exultation at the words of praise bestowed upon him, followed the old chief closely, and drank in every word.

For several moments there was a silence, and then it was gradually succeeded by a deepening murmur. The old chief who presided leaned down and conferred with some of his wise men who sat near him. Then he suddenly rose to his feet, and waving his hand, commanded silence.

Instantly the tent-room was still. The old chief turned to the prisoner, and asked him a question in Mingo. The young man shook his head, signifying that he did not understand the language.

Old Nin-neet-lah spoke to him again—this time using the Tuscarora dialect. The prisoner bowed, and answered the

question at once. He understood Tuscarora ; Red Belt had been his teacher.

"The brother, the Leaping Deer, has companions. Does he know the renegade, called by the pale-faces Red Belt ?"

"I do, and well. He is a brave whose friendship is worth having—whose lips never lied—whose right hand never gave a treacherous grip—whose rifle is sure—whose friendship lasting—whose hate eternal !"

Such was the answer returned by the prisoner.

The old Tuscarora chief slightly started, but immediately checked himself and looked down at the ground.

A loud murmur followed the words of Roydon Howe. But old Nin-neet-lah checked it, and said, with a frown :

"My white brother speaks large words—words which would thrill our hearts, were it not that Red Belt did prove a traitor to his tribe, and attempted to steal honors and glory which he had not won. But enough of him ! My brother also knows the Lean Wolf. Will he tell us *his* hiding-place, that our braves may find him ? Will our brother do this, if we give him liberty ?"

"Never ! never ! Hack me to pieces, and burn my body to ashes ; but do not ask me to be false to him, who has stood between me and flying bullets times unnumbered ; who taught me to tread the trail, and walk upon the dangerous war-path !"

Loud and high rung Roydon Howe's hot, swelling words, and then an ominous murmur rose in the assembly. The fire in the breasts of those swarthy sons of the forest was kindled ; yet they admired pluck and fidelity in any one. The old Nin-neet-lah himself seemed warmed into admiration for him.

"Bravely spoken ! bravely spoken, Leaping Deer ! And now, more than ever, we would have you one of us. Come into the tribe ; wear the wampum with us ; fight with us ! We will make you a chief in our midst, and old Nin-neet-lah, the chief of the tribes, will give to you, as your squaw, Mis-kwa, once the affianced of the renegade, Red Belt. Speak, pale-faced brave, but speak not without thinking."

For an instant a violent convulsion swept over the prisoner's frame as he cast his eyes toward the shrinking maiden.

Then he answered, in a low, sonorous voice. All hung on that reply. It came, thus :

" No, no, mighty chief ! I can not forget my rearing ! I can not forget that my skin is white. I can not join the tribes, nor can I take the pretty Mis-kwa for my squaw. She *was* promised to one in every way worthy of her ; and who would have flung honor upon her ; one *who would now die for her !* As for me, alas ! my heart can never love any thing in the shape of woman, save the memory of a sainted mother !"

The old Tuscarora chief had almost sprung to his feet as Roydon Howe gave his second reply ; and now, as he uttered his third, the chief bent his head, and let a silent tear drop upon his hard, swarthy hands.

There was a deep silence for several moments, and then, slowly, old Nin-neet-lah arose to his feet. His voice was very low and solemn as he said :

" It is ordered, my white brother, in consideration of your name as a warrior, and of the fact that you stepped between Oo-lum-lah, the brave, and death, that you be not slain at once. It is decreed that at sunrise to-morrow morning, you run the short gantlet. Be brave, be strong, my brother, for our hearts are with you."

Then, at a sign, the drum rolled, and the council-tent was slowly emptied.

As Wild Hawk passed by the prisoner, he whispered in his ear :

" Be brave, my brother ! Wild Hawk *never forgets a kindness !*" and he passed on.

This was spoken in Tuscarora.

As the tall, stately Man-e-wa-wa strode along, he suddenly bent his lofty head carelessly, and said, in the prisoner's ear :

" Be brave, Roy ! Old Sampson *never forgets his friends, and Whistling Dick never lies !*" and he passed on.

This was spoken in English.

CHAPTER XII.

SHADOWS BY MOONLIGHT.

NIGHT, dark and impenetrable, had fallen upon the Indian village, and gradually all sounds died away. In an hour, all was silence. Roydon Howe was again bound to the pole in the center of the tent, and there left.

Away off in another section of the village, toward the dark line of forest land, which marked the course of the winding Scioto, a single lodge, solitary and alone, reared itself in the gloom. The nearest tent to this was distant several hundred paces. The curtain of skins was rolled down before the entrance, and every thing was silence there.

A dark form slid along cautiously and noiselessly, through the dense undergrowth, toward the lodge. It was a man. He occasionally paused, and then, after listening intently for a moment, would steal on again—his tread as soft as a cat's, and giving forth no sound soever. Onward he glided, and at last stood near the clearing in front of the tent, and almost without the dark underbrush.

Suddenly a pale, rapidly-increasing light, half spectral, half real, glowed down and fell straight upon the curtain, covering the entrance to the lodge.

It was the moon climbing slowly up into the dark sky.

The man started, and for an instant forgot his caution. Inadvertently his foot trod heavily down, and a dry twig snapped with a preternatural distinctness in the air. The man paused at once, and remained as motionless as a statue. Thus he stood for several moments, scarcely breathing, and his dark form so commingling with the deep shade of the underbrush, that the sharpest eye could not detect it.

But then he stole forward once more, and in a few seconds had cleared the undergrowth and stood in the now bright moonlight. He was a tall, swarthy savage, and in his right hand he carried a strong bow—an arrow being fitted to the tense cord.

He did not hesitate an instant, but strode hurriedly yet cautiously to the curtain screen, and lifting it gently, peered in.

Long and anxiously he gazed, but he did not seem satisfied. No sound came forth from the tent, and nothing without indicated the presence of any lookers-on. The savage still hesitated. But then, after glancing cautiously around him, he gently grasped the curtain rope, and slowly, cautiously, drew it up.

The easy-working skin gave forth no sound. The moon shimmered down brilliantly its silver full into the lodge, lighting it up in its every part.

The savage looked in greedily, as he tightened his grasp upon the bow. But then he started violently back, and as stoical and as stolid as he was, yet he could not repress an exclamation of anger and chagrin.

The tent was empty!

Slowly the Indian let fall the curtain, and turned about; and then he stood with his face standing out clearly in the broad flash of moonlight.

But in another moment he glided away as noiselessly as he had come, and was soon lost to sight in the bushes.

Scarcely had he gone, when the skin, of which the tent was made, at the further side of the lodge, was slowly pushed aside, and the head and shoulders of a brawny savage, with a long white beard, pushed into the apartment, then the man drew his whole body in.

Then he straightened up his towering form, until his lofty head almost touched the top of the lodge. For a moment he hesitated, and then lightly trod toward the curtain screen by the entrance, and peeped out.

The sharp pencil of silver moonlight which glinted through the narrow opening, shone on the venerable face and stately form of old Man-e-wa-wa, the Tuscarora.

For a whole minute the old chief stood gazing out; then he slowly returned to the interior of the lodge. As he did so, he uttered a low, scarcely audible whistle of relief.

Then the old warrior sunk into the deep shade of the further end of the lodge.

Ten minutes afterward the skin was raised gently at the rear of the tent, and the form of a man slowly crawled out. He

paused not, until he had progressed in this manner several yards. Then he suddenly sprung to his feet, and darted, like wind, toward the neighboring belt of dark woods.

It was only for an instant that the man appeared in the broad space of moonlight, which streamed down gorgeously, behind the lodge, and then he was swallowed up in the forest.

When Wild Hawk had disappeared in the forest—in the opposite direction—he hastened on, wending his way toward the village, at the further side of which his lodge stood. He slackened not his speed, now disdaining all caution. Suddenly a rustle in the bushes behind him fell upon his ear. Like lightning the wily Indian sunk to the ground.

Just at this moment, Derrick Thorne dashed furiously upon him, exclaiming in a low, vengeful voice:

"Now, at last, boasting Wild Hawk, we have met! Now we are both free; and now I will teach you how to fling insult at a white brave, and he a king's officer!"

The two strong men met in a deadly embrace. There was no flinching on either side. Their knives met, and fire twinkled from the tempered blades. But, as yet, not a drop of blood had been drawn. Thorne fought well and desperately; perhaps he could do nothing else. He made a fierce effort to come to close quarters with his brawny adversary. But in this he was foiled.

Wild Hawk knew his advantage, and determined to keep it. He kept the white man at arm's length, and watched his opportunity. Suddenly, however, by a quick, vigorous dash, Thorne got close in, and dealt a venomous thrust. The knife was warded partially, but its keen edge ran like lightning over the chieftain's arm.

With a low, sharp cry of rage, Wild Hawk sprung forward, and returned the blow. His knife fell with a heavy thud, piercing the fleshy part of Thorne's arm through and through. Then quick as lightning he withdrew the blade, and was about to repeat the stroke, when the white man turned, and breaking violently away, fled like wind through the bushes.

In an instant Wild Hawk had his bow in his hand, and had drawn the barbed shaft back to his ear; but, Derrick Thorne was no more in sight.

With a grim chuckle to himself, Oo-lum-lah lowered the bow—flung it over his shoulder, tossed the arrow into the quiver, and without paying further heed to his wound, strode away toward his lodge.

He had just reached the door, when he started wildly as a ringing whoop, then two rifle-shots, at short intervals, echoed through the village.

CHAPTER XIII.

MIS-KWA, THE RED SKY OF MORNING.

It will be remembered that we left Roydon Howe with his hands tied behind him, to the tent stake. Far in the night he was aroused by a slight chirrup, sounding, it seemed, not far from him.

The young man listened intently. The chirrup ceased, and he did not hear it for some moments. Then, came the chirrup, louder than ever, again and again with startling clearness.

There was no mistaking it; the sound came not from beetle or bug. There was something strange, something *insinuating* in its echo.

All at once he started; he heard another sound which was unmistakable. It was the noise made by a sharp knife, passing swiftly yet cautiously through the tough skins at the back part of the lodge.

The young man glanced toward the rear of the tent, and listened, and waited patiently; then he crept as far as his cords would allow him, and peered through the skin curtain at the door of the lodge.

The swarthy sentinels were plainly visible in the moonlight, which was now becoming brighter and brighter every moment. But from their quiet, steady tramp, it was plain they suspected nothing was wrong, and had not heard the suspicious sounds at the rear of the lodge.

The young man watched the guards closely for a moment, and then retreated again into the tent. He had scarcely seated

himself, and turned his face in the direction whence came the singular sounds, when he heard the chirrup again.

Then almost instantly a section of the tent, several feet in length, and, at least, two broad, was raised, and a light, agile figure leaped, or rather slid, in. The prisoner sprung to his feet and started back.

"Hist! white brave! 'Tis I, Mis-kwa, the promised bride of Red Belt. I am come to cut the cruel thongs which bind you—to let you go, that your life may be yours, and that you may bear tidings to the brave of his Mis-kwa."

The girl straightened up and approached him. The young man, almost dumbfounded, was about to speak, but the maiden stopped him at once.

"'Sh! white brave; speak not, but listen, for the hours are speeding. Tell my brave, when you stand with him again, what Mis-kwa did for you, and say to him that his wild forest-flower lives only for him; that Mis-kwa will die before she will mate with another brave than he. Now, white brave, I will point you out the way of safety. The moon strikes the lodge, but gleams not behind it. Far away, even to the black woods by the river, the dark shadow falls. Once in it, be brave, and look not behind. Keep your face straight to the east, and *look not behind you*, I beg of you. The way will lead you to your friends."

The girl then, with her knife, cut the thongs at a stroke.

"Oh, Mis-kwa! Mis-kwa!"

"'Sh! 'sh! white warrior. Be quiet! Mis-kwa hears steps. Be quiet, and, be brave!"

With these words she drew from her bosom a long, keen knife, and stepping back, awaited calmly what was coming. Roydon Howe, too, prepared himself for whatever it might be. The young man thought that the girl had been discovered and followed, and he determined to defend her with his life. He awaited. Then he heard a soft sound—what it was he could not tell.

Mis-kwa stood like a statue, her ear bent slightly toward the ground—her eyes, anon, glancing around her. But then the sound ceased.

Suddenly, however, a sharp, vibrating sound was distinctly heard. Mis-kwa sprung lightly forward, and clutching the

young man by the arm, pointed silently to the tent-pole. It was shaking violently.

The prisoner started backward in amazement; for, quick as lightning, the dark form of a savage dropped lightly from above, upon the floor of the tent.

"RED BELT!"

"MIS-KWA!"

And the lovers were locked in a long, yearning embrace.

Oh! the bliss of that brief moment to those poor hearts, which time and terrible circumstances had so sundered. But it was only a moment.

The noble Indian gently released the maiden from his breast, and murmured, softly:

"May the Great Spirit be thanked, my wild rose of the forest, my beautiful Red Sky of the Morning, that your brave can see you once again! Alas, alas! my Mis-kwa, Red Belt has not come now to woo his mateless one—he has not come now to whisper sweet words in the ear of his beloved. No, no, not now! He comes to save his friend, and the time is fast speeding."

Raising her soft, lustrous eyes to the face of the young warrior, she gently whispered back:

"The words of her brave are *laws* to Mis-kwa! And Mis-kwa will pray to the Manitou in the sky, for the day to come when she may gather wild-flowers to bind around the brow of her brave, when he shall return again, strong and proud, to his tribe, and when Mis-kwa will be his bride, and set his lodge in order."

Then Red Belt turned toward the prisoner. Only a glance, and the two men—the red and the white, were locked in a fraternal embrace. But, the young Indian quickly released himself; he had already said that the time was speeding.

"My brother," he said, in a low tone, "we have work before us. The great hunter awaits our coming. He is in rifle-shot; we must not keep him. And Mis-kwa, Red Belt is proud of his wild flower—yet now, she must be gone. Press those dear lips once more to mine and be gone! Be gone, with the promise from your brave, that he will come again for you, and then we will walk together the path of life. Fare thee well—and be brave, my beautiful Red Sky of Morning!"

For an instant the girl flung her arms passionately around his neck, and clung there desperately. Then she suddenly unlocked her grasp, and touching lightly the hand of Roydon Howe as she passed, she trod swiftly, yet softly to the opening in the tent. There she paused and listened for a moment; then quickly lifting the swaying skin, she passed out.

Red Belt and Roydon Howe stood perfectly still for several moments, after the noble-hearted maiden had gone. Then the prisoner crept to the door and peered through the narrow opening out at the never-tiring sentinels.

There they were still, their rifles cast carelessly over their shoulders—walking up and down their beat.

The two—Red Belt preceding—moved to the opening, cut by Mis-kwa's knife, and went silently out.

The long line of shade to the rear of the tent was now broken in two places, by broad, white patches of moonlight.

Red Belt paused and, still in a crouching position, shook his head. Then as if re-forming a resolve, he sprung to his feet, and giving his companion a signal, darted away.

On they dashed. They passed, in safety, the first belt of light, but, as they entered the second, a wild whoop from one of the sentinels echoed far and wide. In an instant a rifle ball whistled after the fugitives. But it passed harmlessly by.

The sentinels again sent forth their warning cry, and darted on in pursuit.

All at once, another rifle-shot rung sharp and clear in the air. It came from the depths of the neighboring wood. The foremost of the pursuing Indians sprung high in air, and fell forward upon his face, while there came from the dark forest, a wild, almost unearthly whoop of triumph and defiance.

It was at this instant, that Wild Hawk, as we have mentioned, suddenly paused by the door of his lodge.

CHAPTER XIV.

"VINES LEAVE NO TRAIL!"

THE Mingo warrior hesitated only for a moment; he knew well the meaning of those cries—those rifle-shots. With a wild, answering cry he sprung forward.

In a few moments the whole village was aroused, and warriors—bows and rifles in hand—were hurrying swiftly to and fro. Wild Hawk suddenly paused as the wild whoop of defiance, came from the dark forest bordering the river. The chief shook his head, and then, as a grim smile of satisfaction passed over his painted face, he muttered:

"Oo-lum-lah was not wrong! The Lean Wolf is a wily warrior, but, he is now in the hands of those who would stretch his scalp in their wigwams!"

With that he sent forth his own peculiar war-whoop, and rushed on.

As soon as Red Belt, followed by Roydon, was in the wood, he paused, and uttered a low, peculiar ery. In an instant old Sampson Lowe sprung from the bushes, and clasping the young white man to his breast, exclaimed:

"God be praised, my boy! But—come!"

In a moment the three, followed by the faithful Eagle, had darted away toward the thick brake bordering the marsh-land by the river.

The air was now filled with ringing shouts from the pursuing Indians, and their torches were flashing wildly in the village. Already a score of swarthy warriors had plunged into the woods, and were hurrying along, greedy, on the trail.

The old hunter and his party kept straight onward—Sampson Lowe leading the way, as one perfectly familiar with the ground. But they could now hear the pursuers upon their track, rushing along through the thick underbrush. At length, and in a shorter time than it takes us to record it, the three had entered the thick, interlacing undergrowth which grew in

the wet land, near the river-bank. Here their feet sunk deep at every step.

Suddenly the old hunter paused.

"No, no, boys; we *can't* do it!" he muttered. "I did hope to get into the river and throw them off the trail; then to strike for the other side. The rascals are too close upon us; we *can't* make it."

He paused and glanced around him, then continued, hurriedly:

"We're in danger, boys—greater than any we've met before. We must be smart, and—right away. We must take to the vines! *They* leave no trail; come, boys. Now, up with you, Roy; then you, Red Belt; old Sampson will stay awhile and talk with Eagle. Away with you! time is precious!"

Roydon Howe did not wait to ask questions; he knew old Sampson well, and he gave his opinion the full value. Without a word, he looked above him hurriedly; and then springing lightly up, he seized a tough grape-vine, about a foot from the top of his head. Then, as the huge muscles of his arms swelled, he drew himself swiftly upward, yet at the same time cautiously.

A moment more and there was a violent tremor of the thick bushes overhead, and then all was still.

"Good!" muttered the old hunter to himself; "the boy is deft with his hands, and—*true to his teaching!*"

Then Red Belt, without waiting for a bidding, clutched the same slender but wonderfully strong vine, and swinging his feet lightly from the ooze beneath him, likewise soon disappeared above. And the old hunter's face was wreathed with a proud, triumphant smile, as he muttered again:

"Good! *very* good! Old Sampson, the Lean Wolf, taught him *that* trick!"

Then the old man waited for a moment, bending his ear and listening keenly. The smile faded from his face, and a dark shade, nay, an ominous frown, gathered there, as he heard those unmistakable sounds rapidly approaching.

Beyond a doubt the Indians, with their accustomed instinct,—we can call it nothing else—had struck the trail.

The old hunter suddenly stooped, and patted the dog on the head—the noble animal standing expectant, yet patient, by

his side. The dog returned the caress silently, by licking his master's hand, and by gently wagging his tail. Then old Sampson leaned over him, pointed his head due west, and giving him a smart slap on the flank, he said, in a deep, authoritative voice :

" Go, Eagle ! "

The sagacious animal glanced once at his master ; then, uttering a low, affectionate whine, bounded away like wind.

The old man gazed after him for a few moments, and then raising his lofty form up, he leisurely grasped the grape-vine, and slowly drew his long form out of sight in the bushes above. In a moment he stood by the side of Red Belt and Roy, upon a large limb, high above the ground.

All this time the whoops were coming nearer, and the crackling bushes showed that the Indians took no precautions in the pursuit, feeling sure of their game. Then, in a few moments, the savages had entered the wet marsh-land.

Suddenly they paused, for they had lost the trail. Then there came a hurried consultation—the deep, guttural murmurs being distinctly borne to the ears of those who stood in the deep gloom, high up in the tree, not twenty paces distant.

After a pause, steps splashing through the muddy tussocks of the swamp were heard ; and in a few moments a dark group passed directly beneath the thick tree, in the branches of which the old hunter and his friends were concealed. They passed by, hurrying on toward the river.

The old man breathed freer. Without speaking, he turned, and grasping the limb above him with a strong clutch, he beckoned the others to follow, and began to swing himself from branch to branch. The others did the same, and thus they made rapid progress, at their dizzy height, never hesitating at all.

At length they paused. They were now, all three, panting with exertion. But they did not stop long.

" We have flung 'em off, boys—for a spell, at least ! " said the old trapper, cautiously. " Now we'll double, and give them another chance for a trail. The vines are getting thin ; they will not take us much further. Once on the ground, we must trust to our legs, and our—rifles ! We may have trouble. But, come."

As he spoke he hurried off once more, half springing, half stepping from bough to bough. The others at once followed.

An hour passed—then another; and at last, just as the day was breaking, the old hunter paused and looked around him.

The forest was clearing up, getting more open, and the clustering vines, which had for so great a distance bound the trees together in such a complete network, were now broken and scattered. The old man looked about him for a moment.

"'Tis over, boys!" he muttered, "and it has been hard work!"

In a moment he stooped—they were on a limb, near the brake below them, for the vines had ceased to clamber high up—and grasping the branch of the tree with his right hand, holding his faithful rifle in his left, he swung himself off, and dropping through the bushes, alighted safely on the hard ground below. In a moment, Red Belt and Roydon Howe stood by him.

Without waiting longer than to stretch themselves, they hurried off, through the dim light of the early dawn. Gradually the light increased, and the sun arose. Suddenly old Sampson stopped and glanced down at his feet. Then he let drop his rifle, and leaning upon it, silently gazed for a moment at what had attracted his attention.

Without speaking, he pointed to the plain, unmistakable trace of moccasin-tracks upon the dewy grass. The others looked too, but said not a word, though their faces were anxious and serious.

"We *will* have trouble, boys!" muttered the old man; "the rascals know our plans. They'll try and ambush us, by the Ohio. Well—well! Whistling Dick has *never* lied! Come!" and again they plunged ahead.

At length they reached the rolling hills. Here the little party paused by a spring, near which was an open sward. It seemed like a sort of stopping-place.

The old hunter placed his rifle beside a tree, and then uttered a quick, short halloo. Again and again he sent forth the cry. Suddenly a quick rushing noise was heard—the bushes parted, and Eagle, splashed with mud, and looking hungry and gaunt, dashed into the little space. The meeting between the men

and the faithful animal was as cordial, and far more earnest than among some friends.

Then a breakfast was prepared—a sleep of two or three hours indulged in, and then once more the hardy pioneers resumed their way toward the far-off Ohio.

When the sun arose that morning in the Indian village it was soon discovered that the tent in which the prisoner had been confined, had been cut in the rear, and that the white brave had escaped. It was also soon known that another had disappeared—Derrick Thorne, the messenger from Dunmore.

Later in the day the news spread that the lodge of Man-e-wa-wa, was empty. The old Tuscarora had left no trace behind him, and had gone as silently and secretly as he had come.

And then that day, as those who had made the pursuing party, returned one by one, and then in squads, a glad, happy smile broke over the sad, sweet face of Mis-kwa, the Red Sky of Morning. But then as the news came in by a runner, still later in the day, that Oo-lum-lah, the Mingo, with a dozen chosen followers, had bent their way toward the Big River for the purpose of cutting off the retreat of the fugitives, a black shade came to the maiden's brow, and an ominous fire glowed in her eyes. Then in the silence of the mighty Nin-neet-lah's lodge, Mis-kwa prayed earnestly to the Great Spirit to watch over and guard her brave, and those who, with him, trod the perilous war-path.

Onward sped the hunter and his party; but they had again turned aside from the direct route, and made a long detour around the base of the line of hills, which frowned in their way and through which they had originally intended to pass.

The day dragged itself slowly by, and night fell.

We will not follow the hunters step by step, but will simply state that all next day the fleeing party pressed on, and at last, as night fell once more, stood on the banks of the darkly-flowing Ohio.

There they paused. They had struck the river some distance lower than they had intended, and below the point at which they had secured the canoe. They rested for a time, and then turning their faces, pushed on up the bank of the river.

Suddenly the trapper halted, and making a sign to those

behind him to remain quiet, he slung his rifle into the hollow of his arm, and stooping down crept cautiously onward, bending his steps as he went toward the thick underbrush away from the bank. At the old man's heels trod the faithful dog. Then he was out of sight.

Several moments passed—then a half-hour. Still the young men stood there, and awaited in silence for future developments.

Suddenly a rifle rung sharp and clear above the silence, and almost in immediate response came another report; but the latter was dull and heavy compared to the former.

Then a wild battle-cry echoed over the woods.

Red Belt and Roydon Howe knew that cry, and without hesitating a moment, they sprung forward at a run.

CHAPTER XV.

THE WILD HAWK'S PARTING CRY.

We will follow the hunter.

The old man had seen the marks of a trail on the shore; the tracks were made by an Indian's moccasin, and they led up the river in the direction which he and his party were going. This was the most serious of all feared trouble, for the old hunter's canoe was concealed just ahead. Should that be discovered, nothing short of a miracle could save them.

Old Sampson Lowe trod cautiously along until he had entered the edge of the forest—all the time quickly, but closely following the trail which was so plainly imbedded in the loamy clay of the river-bank.

He paused, as at last he stood in the dense forest itself, and peered cautiously around him, for now the trail was lost. Then all at once the bushes just ahead of him were shaken violently, and in the twinkling of an eye, a rifle-barrel glowed dimly in the uncertain light.

A brief second, and a bright flash spitted out in the gloom, and a ringing report echoed and reechoed in the woods.

But the vengeful bullet had sped over the old hunter, and

buried itself far away in the yellow waters of the Ohio. The Lean Wolf had heard the noise, and he had seen the ominous glimmer of the rifle-barrel; and when the flaming fire had leaped from the dark muzzle, the old backwoodsman had already fallen to his knees.

But no sooner had the reverberating report of the rifle gone forth, than, in an instant, old Sampson was upon his feet. Nor was he a minute too soon—nay, not a second; for following the smoke of the rifle, rushed a tall, brawny savage with scalping-knife raised aloft, ready for the work he doubtless thought in store for him.

There was no time even for Whistling Dick to be brought into position; the weapon was too long for close quarters. But in less time than it takes to write it, old Sampson snatched his pistol from his belt, and not even extending his arm, fired.

The Indian sprung high in air and staggered backward. But he did not fall. The ball from the pistol had passed in a quarter inch of his temple, but the man was not hurt. He had dropped his knife, however. Nor did he pause to search for it, but snatching his tomahawk, again dashed forward upon his adversary.

The hunter did not give back an inch; he stood upon the defensive, and as the Indian rushed upon him, old Sampson ducked his head and stepped out of his path. The savage came on like a whirlwind; he could not, at once, check himself. Another moment, and a clear, swinging stroke from the old hunter's rifle, fell upon his shoulder.

The blow was aimed at the Indian's head; it was lucky for him it fell where it did. As it was, the savage went down like a brained ox. In an instant the dog had sprung forward and clutched him by the throat. But the old hunter hurled him away, and springing himself upon his prostrate foe, dug his fingers into his neck. Another moment, and his knife glittered aloft.

But the old hunter slowly lowered his knife, though he did not release his hold on the writhing Indian.

"Be quiet, my brother!" he muttered. "Be quiet, or the Lean Wolf's knife will drink the blood of Oo-lum-lah! Hark ye, Wild Hawk! The old hunter owes you no favors; he well remembers the day you treacherously drove your lead

into his shoulder, when he had pulled you from between the logs on the Maumee, because he *couldn't* see a fellow-critter drowned before his eyes. But, my brother, though the Lean Wolf has long treasured up a score against you, yet he can not slay you now. The white hunter can not forget your kindness toward his brother, the Leaping Deer. No, no! So, he gives you your life now. But, mark me, Oo-lum-lah! beware of the day when you *again* cross Lean Wolf's path, for then we'll have no credits between us, and the *old* balance must then be settled! Now, I'll just take that tomahawk, and toss it away; 'tis a dangerous thing to play with. Then—why, you had better be gone, for—yes—the Lean Wolf hears those coming who would not spare the Wild Hawk. Go, Oo-lum-lah; again the old hunter gives you your life. Go, and remember that the Lean Wolf, though he pulls a deadly trigger, has, at times, a squaw's heart!"

As he spoke, the old man snatched the Mingo's tomahawk, and with a single whirl, flung it far into the river. Then he arose to his feet.

Instantly Oo-lum-lah sprung up, with the agility of a cat; for a moment he gazed on the old hunter. Then striding forward he grasped him by the hand, and muttered:

"Wild Hawk will not forget! He has found his master! Let the Lean Wolf keep his ear open for Oo-lum-lah, in the dark days which are even now flinging their shadows around."

Then turning, he glided into the bushes and was soon out of sight and sound.

At that moment Red Relt and Roydon Howe, who had been floundering about in the ooze of the shore, burst through the bushes. The old hunter waved them to silence, and without entering into any explanation, beckoned them to follow him.

A moment more and all three, followed by Eagle, were creeping away again along the bank of the river. They paused not once, nor did they look behind. In ten minutes, they reached their canoe, which, on a hurried examination, they found to be all right. Quickly leaping in, followed by Eagle, they pushed from shore.

The night was deepening, and the pale, phosphorescent-like glow on the verge of the sky betokened the rising of the moon.

Just then a loud splash reached the ears of the hunter's party, and in a moment the rapid dash of quickly-driven paddles was borne to them.

The old trapper took his own paddle from the water, and whispered Roydon Howe to do the same. The canoe's progress was checked, and she drifted with the current. Old Sampson turned around in his seat, and bent his gaze backward, in the gloom, toward the western shore.

Slowly the silver gleaming uprose in the far-off sky ; slowly it spread its shining halo above the tree-tops.

At that moment, a violent splashing and commotion in the water, some distance astern, was borne to the ears of those in the little canoe ; then wild whoops and gurgling cries. Then there was silence.

A grim smile passed over old Sampson Lowe's face, and he muttered, aloud :

"At last! . . . The plug is out, and there'll be fewer red-skins on the return trail! I hope— Ha! I am glad of it! *He* has grit and gratitude, after all!" he suddenly exclaimed, as a wild, ringing, peculiar whoop boomed over the water from the dark forest beyond.

"'Tis the Wild Hawk's cry," said Red Belt, quietly ; "and he sends *us* greeting and farewell."

"Ay!" was all the old hunter said, as he again seized his paddle and drove the boat forward. Away darted the canoe. At last the eastern side of the river was reached, and after paddling a half-hour the mouth of the Great Kanawha was reached. A few vigorous shoves, and the canoe glided into its old waters.

But in three quarters of an hour after the accident to the pursuing boat, the long black canoe suddenly shot out again from the land, the prow pointed westward. In that boat sat some six or eight painted warriors.

All night long the hunters urged their canoe up the Great Kanawha. They did not exert themselves, for they were almost exhausted, and did not think now of pursuit.

The next morning, just before the sun rose, the hunting-party landed at their cave, and in a few minutes were once again in their old stronghold, behind the palisades on the summit of the bald, flinty cliff.

And as they glanced around them, then at each other, there was a silence for several moments.

Each one, in his own way, was returning thanks to the Great Spirit for his care and protection.

CHAPTER XVI.

OLD SAMPSON'S SECRET.

THE cave was found in the same condition as that in which it had been left by old Sampson and Red Belt; nothing had been disturbed. The place looked and *felt* like home.

The day passed slowly away. The hunters did not stir out at all, but, exhausted from their exertions of the past few days, spent the hours in deep, sweet sleep. So sound was their slumber, and so long did it last, that they did not see a large Indian canoe, late in the afternoon, shoot, on the opposite side, around the bend, and disappear in the gloomy creek to the left of the bluff.

But such a canoe, at such an hour, did paddle swiftly by the cave, and soon glide out of sight around the elbow of the junction of the two streams.

At length night settled down, and then a bright, sparkling fire gleamed on the summit of the cliff. The gleams from that fire glowed through the interstices of the palisade, and high above it too, shedding a glittering light far and wide in the night.

The hunters were at last awake. They were now thoroughly refreshed, and were sitting around the camp-fire. A sad and gloomy expression rested upon their faces, as the crackling fire which drove away the noxious vapors of the night, flashed upon them, seated so silently around.

It was evident that there had already been a lengthened conversation between the three, and that it was not pleasing in character; that sad thoughts had been awakened in their bosoms, and that now there was a pause.

The night was very dark; the moon, now, did not rise until after midnight. The air was raw and chilly. At length old Sampson looked up.

"Yes, boys," he said, "there's no denying it. You know ever since April there's been more or less quarreling and fighting, and the thing's going to wind up in—*blood*. I know it."

"My brother is wise; his words have truth in them. We will see this before the rising and the waning of another moon," said Red Belt, quietly.

"Exactly," continued old Sampson. "From what I—the old Tuscarora, ha! ha!—heard in the council, I'm satisfied, boys, that that man Dunmore is—well, is a scoundrel! We poor col'nes have suffered many things which weren't right. That bad-hearted man knows our temper, and *he knows our strength*. He is trying to get us tangled up with the tribes for a deep purpose. He wants us to get our hands full, then we *can't* do any thing against George III. Pshaw! so *he thinks!* But, boys, we'll see! There's more than one of us knows Dunmore; and that black-hearted tool of his—that villain—Derrick Thorne!"

The old man paused as a fierce frown suddenly wrinkled his brow, and drove away the half-melancholy shade resting there.

And then there was a complete silence, save indeed the rustle of the leaves, and the wash of the river. An hour passed thus, and still the hunters looked silently into the smoldering coals.

The fire was now dim, only occasionally sending up a flashing spark. But then, the old hunter flung upon it an armful of fresh fagots, and soon the fire was sparkling and roaring again.

"So, my red brother," at length muttered old Sampson, as if returning to an old topic already discussed—the sad look coming again to his face, "you have determined to return at once to the Scioto, to bring back with you the pretty Mis-kwa?"

The Indian bowed quietly. His face was stern and composed.

Before the sun rises and sinks seven times, Red Belt must be on his way through the wilderness. Dark battle-clouds

are in the air—the pipe has been buried—the hatchet dug up, and soon the din of war will roll around us. Red Belt's heart is sad—a mighty weight seems pressing him down. But he will be true to his Mis-kwa! Before the black clouds burst, Red Belt would lock his arms around the waist of his Mis-kwa, and call her his bride."

"Then it is settled," said the hunter, in a low voice, after a slight pause.

Then ensued another silence, and once more the fire had burned down.

Roydon Howe, who had been all along remarkably silent, flung upon it another supply of fuel. Then turning to the old hunter, he said :

"Sampson, my friend, can you not tell us, to-night, your *secret*—that secret, always brought to you at the mention of a certain—a *hellish* name?" and the young man himself shuddered. "We are on the brink of great events, Sampson, and we know not what the morrow will bring forth. You can trust ~~me~~, my friend; and the hour *may* come, when for *vengeance's* *sake*," and the young man hissed the words—"it will be too late to tell the tale. Tell us the dark secret, which lurks in your bosom."

As Roydon Howe spoke, he drew near the old hunter, and looked him appealingly in the face. Red Belt likewise raised his own sad face to the hunter's.

The old man half shrunk away, and the frown on his brow was as black as midnight. A terrible shiver passed over his frame; but the emotion and its traces subsided, and the hunter slowly sat upright. He glanced once into the fire, and then looking up, said, in a low, unnaturally hoarse but distinct voice :

"Yes, my friends; I'll tell you the tale. 'Tis brief; but old Sampson will never forget it *until the record is washed out in blood!* . . . Well, you must know, boys, that old Sampson, years ago, lived by selling peltry, and Whistling Dick, who *never* lied, was all the help I had. And I made money fast enough, for *my* skins were not spoiled; a little hole in the head was all. Williamsburg, as it is now, was the market. Well, boys," and the old man hesitated, "I used to hunt in company with—with—a black-hearted villain—a white man

at that. The fellow always had bad luck, and I was not too mean or too proud to help him. We were both young then—far younger than now—for what I am telling you happened in old Gov. Dinwiddie's time. Well, well, boys, far up in the valley stood, in those days, a block-house, and a few cabins around it. 'Tis a smart settlement now. It so happened once, that on returning from the woods with our peltry, we stopped over night at the block-house. Bad luck for more than one of us; and *worse luck* it will be yet for *one*! But I must hurry on. . . . There was a shooting-match the day after we arrived, and a handsome hunting-shirt, worked by a settler's daughter—a pretty-faced, blue-eyed girl—was the prize offered. Now I didn't care a button about that shirt; but when I heard so much bragging going on around me, I thought I would let Whistling Dick speak for himself. But I said nothing till the shooting was over. And—and—this companion of mine—blast him! had beat all the rest. When I stepped out with Whistling Dick, he eyed me spitefully; but I paid no heed to him, not thinking there was harm in him. Well, of course, as Whistling Dick *couldn't* fail when pointed right, I won. I got the shirt; alas! 'tis long, long since gone. Well, the next morning this—this villain was not to be found; he and his peltry had both disappeared. I thought strange of it, you may know; but it didn't take me long to find out what was the matter. The fellow was a mean dog any way, and I should have found it out before. He had left me to work my way all alone, with my heavy pack, to the settlements. But I laughed at his spleen. . . . When I reached Williamsburg," the old man paused, and his face was wrinkled with a frown darker than ever. But he proceeded: "When I reached the town, I had hardly set foot in it, when I was seized by a half-dozen of the Governor's guards—who were in wait for me—and hurried away to the guard-house. To all of my questions I received no answer but this: that I had spoken disrespectfully of Governor Dinwiddie, and treasonably of my sovereign. I demanded my accuser's name; they would not tell me. . . . The next morning, oh, God, ! I—I was taken out, and publicly scourged—receiving on my bare back forty lashes!"

The old hunter stopped; his form was writhing, and his

face was a theater of struggling passions. But he controlled himself.

"I only wonder I did not faint under the cruel lash, and when they released me, I reeled and tottered backward. In falling, I flung my hands up, and struck the man who had scourged me, full in the face, tearing away the black mask, which had concealed his features. I started with amazement! But then, like lightning, my energies came to me, again, and with a cry of vengeance I darted upon him. . . . The man who had striped me was *my companion in the hunt!* I saw through it all in a minute. But before I could throttle the villain, the soldiers hurled me away; and then—then—I—I—was *driven from the town in disgrace!* Oh, God! . . . More than twenty-five years have gone by since then; yet I've never been back. But old Sampson has not forgotten HIM—nor a vow then made! The fellow quit the woods, and *nineteen years* rolled by before I again saw him. But I knew him! *I* as a wild, winter afternoon I caught him prowling through the woods near the cave here. We were soon face to face. I rushed upon him; he ran. Whistling Dick was empty; but I had my knife. The fellow was fleet of foot. I accidentally fell, but again pursued. He had gone, however. But, in his trail I found a large bag of gold, and—"

"What! *A bag of gold?*" suddenly exclaimed Roydon Howe, grasping the hunter by the arm, and gazing him wildly in the eye.

"Ay, Roy; a bag of bright gold pieces, which the fellow had, of course, stolen—the same bag which, with our earnings, Red Belt and I sunk the other day in the river—"

The hunter stopped all at once, and bent his ear. Then he scattered the brands of the fire, sprung to his feet, and darted to the loophole in the palisade. No sooner had he reached the opening, when a rifle rung in the air, and another, and another.

"To your places, boys!" exclaimed the old man, sending forth at the same time his loud cry of defiance. Then his long rifle was thrust through the slot; another moment, and its sharp note rung on the air. Almost instantly there came back a frenzied cry from the river-bank, and again rifle-balls were patterning like hail against the strong timbers of the

palisades. Roydon Howe and Red Belt, now as cool as ice, were at their places, and in a few seconds their rifles were flinging back hostile lead.

The attack was sudden, but the defense was prompt, vigorous and effective. In twenty minutes the shots were heard no more; but the sound of splashing paddles was borne to the ears of those who still stood by the loopholes, rifles in hand.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCLUSION.

ONE week had passed, and still the hunters stirred not from the cave. One night, however, just as darkness had fairly fallen, Red Belt stood by the little gate in the palisades. He was in full war-paint and feathers, his rifle was strapped to his shoulders, and he was ready for the long journey.

Few were the words spoken between him and those who loved him as their brother. A long, silent, heart-yearning embrace with the men, a tender, affectionate caress with the dog, and the young Tuscarora tore himself away. In a few moments he was in the hunter's canoe—had pushed out into the stream, and was fairly embarked on his dangerous trip to the distant Scioto, to search out and bring back his darling Mis-kwa.

Long and yearningly the white hunters gazed after him in the gloom. And when he was lost to sight, they listened for the gentle splash of his paddle. Then the faint echoes of that ceased.

Red Belt was gone. Would he and his friends ever meet again this side of the Great Barrier?

We will not invade the domain of history at this point; 'tis a field too arid in its matter-of-fact detail, for a romance; but we will simply say: history records, that the little army of eleven hundred colonists, by order of Lord Dunmore, reached Point Pleasant, at the junction of the Ohio and great Kanawha, on the 30th of September of this same year—1774.

General Andrew Lewis, of Botetourt county, Virginia—who commanded this army—had for some time past entertained deep suspicions against the faith of Lord Dunmore. These suspicions, as subsequent events proved, were well grounded. Lewis' aim was to cross the Ohio, and administer to the unruly tribes a needed chastisement, *before Dunmore could prevent him.*

So, here we find him, on the 30th of September. After the General's arrival, our friends, the hunters, had soon communicated with him, offering their services at the same time. They were gladly accepted.

Still, Red Belt had not returned, and the dreariness in the hunter's heart was deepening.

At length the eventful time approached. The eve of the 10th of October settled down over the dark woods. The little army, perfecting its plans, lay—unsuspecting any hostile movement on the part of the enemy—at Point Pleasant.

The hunters sat around their camp-fire on the bleak, chilly bluff; their eyes were bent upon the fire, and their faces were clouded with a shade of foreboding anxiety.

The night grew deeper, and still the hunters spoke not, as they sat around the smoldering fire.

Suddenly Eagle pricked up his ears—then springing to his feet, uttered a low, angry growl. At that moment a dark form dropped lightly from the top of the palisade, into the interior of the inclosure.

In an instant Roydon Howe and the old hunter, with their rifles, covered the bold intruder, who had come so noiselessly.

“Hold, white warrior! Hold! The Wild Hawk is unarmed,” exclaimed a deep guttural, voice—a voice in nowise tremulous or shaken with fear.

“The Wild Hawk!” from both the hunters.

“Ay, my brother! Oo-lum-lah, the Mingo brave. He has come to repay the kindness of the white braves! He has come to stand with them *in the coming battle!* He has come,” and his voice sunk low, “to tell the white braves, that the Mingoos, the Delawares, the Wyandots, the Cayugas, and the Shawnees, are coming like clouds in the air! *This night*, led on by the great Cornstalk, they will sweep across the Big River,

and fling themselves upon the sleeping pale-face braves at the Point!"

For a moment the old hunter gazed at Oo-lum-lah. Then he strode forward, and cordially grasped the red-man's hand in his.

"I trust you, my brother!" he said, with deep emotion; "and thrice welcome is Oo-lum-lah, the brave! Now, indeed, we stand side by side! Now, the blood between us is white!"

Scarcely had the words fallen from the old hunter's lips, when, suddenly, the small gate leading out through the palisades was hurled open. Instantly two figures sprung in—one a tall savage—the other, a girl.

Old Sampson, suspecting treachery, retreated hastily, and brought his rifle to a present. But he staggered back, and gasped for breath, as he heard a well-known voice exclaim:

"'Tis I, my brother! I, Red Belt, the Tuscarora! And with me comes my wild forest rose, my beautiful Mis-kwa, the Red Sky of Morning! And Oo-lum-lah, the Wild Hawk, bore us company. *He* stood between Red Belt, and Mis-kwa, and a cloud of barbed arrows. His heart is indeed white, and his hand is strong and honest!"

We shall not attempt to describe the scene which ensued.

An hour from that time, four stalwart forms emerged from the cave, and creeping down the rocky bluff, took their way swiftly through the sorrowfully crooning forest. Their faces were toward the west, and their course was along the banks of the Kanawha.

In their company lightly trod an Indian girl.

Another sun had risen; with it came the wild war-whoop, and then the answering cheer from the little army of whites. Then the mad charge—the rattle of rifles, and the roll of musketry. In a few moments the dense forests were festooned with wreaths of powder-smoke, and vocal with whistling bullets and the clash of knives and sabers.

Fierce rolled the tide of battle. The Indians, led on by the great Cornstalk and his braves, and far outnumbering the whites, fought furiously. Step by step they drove the sma...

band of their opponents back, and the gallant soldiers of Lewis were falling on all sides. Still the Indians pressed on.

The shade on the brow of the pale-face General grew darker. In vain he attempted to turn back the tide, which was so swiftly setting his men down to destruction. But he could not check it.

All at once a loud cheer was heard far to the right, on the borders of the creek, and on the flank of the frenzied Indians. Then came the deliberate discharge, one by one, of four rifles; then was heard a commingled whoop of triumph and revenge.

The Indians paused. They were assailed in the rear. The retreating whites halted and faced about again. A moment, and confidence had come to them anew. Then, with steady front and fixed bayonets, they thundered down on the foe, who had been thrown into confusion.

At that instant a grand spectacle was seen.

Four men—two whites, in hunting-shirts and leggings, and two towering Indians, in full war-paint and feathers, were enraged with the enemy—cutting their way through at least two hundred swarthy warriors.

On they came, fighting to win the day by a valor which has been seldom witnessed; on they came, fighting to join their charging companions, coming to retrieve the fortunes of battle.

The savages closed around them; but still they fought. Then the whole line was hid in a cloud of dust and smoke, as the charging whites dashed onward and struck it.

When the smoke cleared away, the savages were swept back to the edge of the timber-land on the creek. The two white hunters were safe and untouched, with their own men; but the two gallant braves, the Indians, who had fought so nobly along with their white brothers, had been borne back, with the surging savages. Nowhere were they to be seen.

Once more the red-men, under their able leaders, formed, and with frenzied yells rushed again to the fight.

At that instant, a wild, almost unearthly wail echoed even above the din of battle; then a flying figure—that of an Indian girl—dashed over the bloody sward, straight toward the dark line of the advancing foe.

A moment more, and the swarthy ranks opened and closed upon the flying Mis-kwa, rushing on to her death!

But the charge of the red-men was met, and the savages were again driven back, bleeding and beaten. In a half-hour the defeat of the Indians was turned into a rout.

The battle had been fought and won.

Night had fallen upon the gory field of carnage.

Two forms, tall and stalwart, stood motionless near the stream.

"Go your way, Roydon Howe; I'll go mine! He is in the reeds, and—*his doom is sealed!*" said one of the men, in a low, soft whisper, as he rammed a battered ball down the muzzle of his long rifle.

The other spoke not, but turned at once, rifle in hand, and sunk out of sight in the shadows by the river.

Ten minutes passed.

Suddenly a man, disguised as an Indian, broke through the bushes.

Instantly two tall figures arose—though fifty yards apart—two rifle-locks clicked in the still air.

"Spare me! spare—"

At that moment two sharp reports rung as one, in the stillness, and the man sprung forward, and fell without a groan.

Then the two men stood over the warm body, and the taller, leaning upon his long rifle, muttered:

"'Tis done! And now Sampson Lowe's back smarts no more! We are square, now, DERRICK THORNE!"

And the other, uncovering his head reverentially, murmured softly, as he lifted his eyes aloft:

"At last! at last! sainted mother; your son has done his duty! His vow is fulfilled!"

Softly the men moved away.

At last they stood in thick brambles, near the very edge of the creek. They paused suddenly; for a low moan—a half-whine—had met their ears. A rustle was heard in the weeds, and Eagle crept silently forth. Then he crawled back again.

The men followed him, and saw a sight.

Lying on the muddy ooze, locked in each other's arms, were Red Belt and Wild Hawk. Their bodies were pierced through

and through with vengeful bullets, and their scalps had been torn greedily away.

Around them were marks of a desperate struggle. On the ground, near their cold bodies, was a piece of wampum.

The old hunter saw it, as the pale moon broke through a rift in the sky. He stooped and picked it up.

Holding it reverentially aloft, so that the splendor of the moonlight would fall upon it, the old man uncovered his head of winter locks, and in a voice scarcely above the whispering of the sighing breeze, read as follows :

"Red Belt and Wild Hawk send their last greeting to their white brothers. Their feet are even now on the dim confines of the Shadow Land ! Be kind to the mateless Mis-kwa, and bid her meet us, with you, in the sky."

That very night, Sampson Lowe and Roydon Howe stole silently forth from the victorious camp, and were soon swallowed up in the darkness of the forest.

Years since then have fled ; but to-day tradition still points out to you a tall, stately oak, near Point Pleasant, at the root of which, in one grave, it is said, Red Belt, the Tuscarora, and Wild Hawk, the Mingo—foes in life, friends in death—

"Sleep the sleep that knows no waking."

THE END.

RED ARROW, THE WOLF DEMON;

OR,

The Queen of the Kanawha.

CHAPTER I.

THE MARK ON THE TREE.

Two rifle-“cracks” broke the stillness of the wilderness that stretched in one almost unbroken line from the Alleghany and Blue Ridge peaks to the Ohio river. The reports re-echoed over the broad expanse of the Kanawha and the Ohio rivers, for the shots were fired near the junction of the two streams—fired so nearly at the same time that the two seemed almost like one report.

Then, before the smoke of the rifles had curled lazily upward in spiral rings on the air, came a crash in the tangled underbrush, and forth into a little open glade—the work of Nature’s master hand—dashed a noble buck. The red stream pouring from a wound just behind the shoulder and staining crimson the glossy brown coat of the forest lord, told plainly that he was stricken unto death.

The buck gained the center of the glade, then his stride weakened; the dash through the thicket was the last despairing effort of the poor brute to escape from the invisible foes whose death-dealing balls had pierced his side.

With a moan of pain, almost human in its expression, the buck fell upon his knees, then rolled over on his side, dead.

The brute had fallen near the trunk of a large oak tree—a tree distinguished from its neighbors by a blazon upon its side, whereon, in rude characters, some solitary hunter had cut his name.

Scarcely had the death-bleat of the buck pierced the silence of the glen, when two men came dashing through the woods, each eager to be the first to secure the game.

One of the two was some twenty yards in advance of the other, and reached the body of the dead buck just as his rival emerged from the thicket.

Placing his foot upon the buck, and rifle in hand, he prepared to dispute the quarry with the second hunter, for both men—strangers to each other—had fired at the same deer.

The hunter who stood with his foot upon the buck, in an attitude of proud defiance, had reloaded his rifle as he ran, and was prepared to defend his right to the game to the bitter end.

In person, the hunter was a muscular, well-built man, standing some six feet in height. Not a clumsy, overgrown giant, hardly able

to bear his own weight, but a man as supple and as active as a panther. He was clad in buck-skin hunting-shirt and leggings, made in the Indian fashion, but unlike that fashion in one respect, and that was that no gaudy ornaments decorated the garments. Upon the feet of the hunter were a pair of moccasins. A cap rudely fashioned from a piece of deer skin, and with the little flat tail of the animal as an ornament, completed the dress of the hunter.

The face of the man was singular to look upon. The features were large and clearly cut. The cold, gray eye, broad forehead, and massive, squarely-chiseled chin, told of dauntless courage and of an iron will. A terrible scar extended from the temple to the chin on the left side of the face.

The hunter was quite young—not over twenty-five, though deep lines of care were upon the face.

The second hunter, who came from the tangled thicket, but paused on the edge of the little glen on beholding the threatening attitude of the hunter who stood with his foot on the deer, was a man who had probably seen forty years. He, too, like the other, was of powerful build, and his muscular frame gave promise of great strength.

He was dressed like the first, in the forest garb of deer-skin, but his dress was gayly fringed and ornamented.

In his hand he bore one of the long rifles so common to the frontier settler of that time, for our story is of the year 1780.

The clear blue eye of the second hunter took in the situation at a glance. He readily saw that the man who stood so defiantly by the deer was not disposed to yield his claim to the animal without a struggle. So the second hunter determined upon a parley.

"Hello, stranger! I reckon we're both arter the same critter," said the hunter who stood on the edge of the little glade.

"Yes; it 'pears so," replied the other, who stood by the deer.

There was something apparently in the voice of the last comer that impressed the first favorably, for he dropped the butt of his rifle to the ground, though he still kept his foot upon the deer's carcass.

"Well, stranger, we can't both have the game. I think I hit him, an', of course, as it is but nat'ral, you think so, too. So I reckon we'd better find out which one of us he belongs to; 'cause I don't want him if my ball didn't finish him, an', of course, you don't want him if he's mine by right," said the second hunter, approaching the other fearlessly.

"You're right, by hookey!" cried the other, yielding to the influence of the good-humored tone of the other.

"Let me introduce myself, stranger, 'cos you seem to be a newcomer 'round hyer," said the old hunter. "My name's Daniel Boone; mayhap you've heard of me."

"Well, I reckon I have!" exclaimed the other, in astonishment. "Thar's few men on the border but what have heerd on you. I'm right glad to see you, kurnel."

"How may I call your name?" asked Boone, who had taken a fancy to the brawny stranger.

"Thar's my mark—my handle," said the stranger, pointing as he spoke to the name carved on the tree-trunk by which the deer had fallen; "that's me."

Boone cast his eyes upon the tree.

Over the village ruled the great chief Ke-ne-ha-ha, or "The-man-that-walks"—the greatest warrior in all the Shawnee nation—a chief wise in council, brave on the war-path, and wily as the red fox.

In the village of the red-men were two whose skins were white, though they were Indians at heart. The two were renegades from their country and their kin.

These two stood together by the river's bank, and idly watched the daring and howling warriors. They were dressed in the Indian fashion, and were sinewy, powerful men in build.

The taller of the two, whose hair and eyes were dark, was called Simon Girty. At one time he had been reputed to be one of the best scouts on the border, but, for some reason, he had forsaken the settlements and found a home with the fierce red-men of the forest-wild, giving up home, country, friends, every thing. He had been adopted into the Indian tribe, and none of his red-skinned brothers seemed to bear as deadly a hatred to the whites as this renegade, Simon Girty.

His companion was not quite so tall or as stoutly built. He was called David Kendrick, and was an adopted son of the Shawnees, as Girty was of the Wyandots.

"This is going to be a bloody business," said Girty, as he surveyed the yelling Indians, who were busy in the "scalp-dance."

"Yes, our chief, Ke-ne-ha-ha, has sworn to break the power of the whites along the Ohio. The braves are well provided with arms by the British Governor. Kentucky never saw such a force upon her border as this will be," replied the other.

"The more the better," said the renegade, Girty, moodily.

Then a howl of anguish rung through the Indian village. The braves stopped their sports to listen. They knew the signal well: it was the wail for the dead. It told that some Shawnee warrior had gone to the spirit-land.

The cry of anguish came from a party of braves entering the village from the south. In their midst they bore what seemed, to the eyes of the renegades, a human body.

The warriors deposited their burden before the door of the council-lodge.

Attracted by the death-note, Ke-ne-ha-ha, the great chief of the Shawnees, came from his lodge.

The chief was a splendid specimen of a man. He stood nearly six feet in height, and was as straight as an arrow. He was quite light in hue for an Indian, and his features were intelligent and finely cut.

Astonishment flashed from his eyes as he gazed upon the face of the dead Indian, around whom, at a respectful distance, were grouped the Shawnee warriors.

The chief recognized the features of the brave known as Little Crow, a stout warrior, and reputed to be one of the best fighting-men in all the Shawnee nation.

"Wah!" said the chief, in a tone that betrayed deep astonishment, "the soul of the Little Crow has gone to the spirit-land—he rests in Manitou's bosom. Let my braves speak—who has taken the life of the Shawnee warrior?"

"Let the chief open his ears and he shall hear," replied one of the braves, a tall, muscular warrior, known as Watega. "Little Crow went forth, last night, to hunt the deer in the woods of the Scioto.

He was a great warrior; his arm was strong—his feet swift on the trail. He told his brothers that he would return before the spirit-lights (stars) died. He did not come. His brothers sought for him. By the banks of the Scioto they found him, but the hatchet of a foe had taken the life of the Little Crow."

Then the chief knelt by the side of the body and examined the wound in the head; the clotted blood marked the spot.

The head of the chief had been split open by a single blow; and that dealt by a giant's hand. The wound had apparently been made by a tomahawk, and, as the chief guessed, the dead man had been attacked suddenly, and from the rear.

"Did my warriors find no trail of the enemy who took the life of their brother?" asked the chief, still keeping his position by the body, and with a puzzled look upon his face.

"Wah! the Shawnee braves have eyes—they are not blind, like owls in the light. When they found the Little Crow dead, they looked for the track of the foe. They found footprints by the body, but the trail came from nowhere and went nowhere."

"And the footprints—Indian or pale-face?"

"Pale-face, but the moccasin of the red-man," answered the brave.

The brow of the chief grew dark. A white foe so near the village of the Shawnee and so daring as to attack and kill one of the best warriors of the tribe, apparently without a struggle must needs be looked after.

"My braves must hunt down the pale-face that wears the moccasin of the Indian and uses the tomahawk," said the chief, gravely.

Then Ke-ne-ha-ha drew aside the blanket that was wrapped around the body of the dead brave. A cry of horror broke from the lips of the great chief, and was reechoed by the surrounding Indians when they gazed upon the naked breast of the dead warrior.

"*The totem of the Wolf Demon!*" exclaimed the chief.

The circle of Indians gazed upon the mysterious mark in silent consternation. Their staring eyes and fear-stricken countenances showed plainly how deeply they were interested.

And what was the totem of the Wolf Demon?

On the naked breast of the brawny dead chief were three slashes, apparently made by a knife, thus:



And the blood, congealing on the skin, formed a Red Arrow.

It was the totem of the Wolf Demon—the invisible and fatal scourge of the great Shawnee nation. Thus he marked his victims.

The chief arose with a troubled look upon his haughty face.

"Let my people sing the death-song, for a brave warrior has gone to the spirit-land. Ke-ne-ha-ha will seek the council of the Great Medicine Man, so that he may learn how to fight the Wolf Demon, who has stricken unto death the great braves of the Shawnee nation, and put the totem of the Red Arrow upon their breasts."

Sorrowfully the warriors obeyed the words of the chief, and soon the sound of lamentation wailed out loud on the air, which, but a moment before, had resounded with the glad shouts of triumph.

Slowly and with knitted brows, Ke-ne-ha-ha betook himself to

the lodge of the old Indian who was the Great Medicine Man of the Shawnee tribe.

The death of one of the principal warriors of his tribe by the dreaded hand of the Wolf Demon, almost within the very precincts of his village, and at the very moment when he was preparing to set out on his expedition against the whites, seemed like an omen of evil.

The two renegades had joined the circle around the dead Indian, and had listened to the story of how he had met his death. Then, when the circle had broken up, they had slowly walked back again to their former position by the bank of the river.

"Dave, the words of the chief are a mystery to me, though the Indians seem to understand them well enough. What did he mean when he spoke of the Wolf Demon? and what did that mark of a Red Arrow cut on the breast of the dead Indian mean?"

"Why, don't you know?" asked the other, in astonishment.

"No; you forget that, for the past six months, I have been at Upper Sandusky, with the Wyandots."

"Yes; and it is just about six months since the Wolf Demon first appeared."

"Explain," said Girty, unable to guess the mystery.

"I will. For the past six months some mysterious being has singled out the warriors of the Shawnee tribe for his victims. He always seems to take them by surprise; single warriors alone he attacks. And on the breast of those he kills he leaves, as his mark, three slashes with a knife, forming a Red Arrow, like the one you saw on this fellow."

"But the name of the Wolf Demon!"

"I will explain. One Indian alone has lived to tell of an encounter with this mysterious slayer. He was only stunned, and recovered. He reported that he was attacked by a huge gray wolf, but with a man's head—the face painted black and white. The wolf stood on its hind legs like a man, but in height far outtopping any human. He caught a glimpse of the monster as it struck him down with a tomahawk that the beast held in its paws. And that's the story of the Wolf Demon who has killed some of the bravest warriors of the Shawnee nation."

"But, what do you think it is?"

"I reckon it's the devil," said the renegade, solemnly.

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